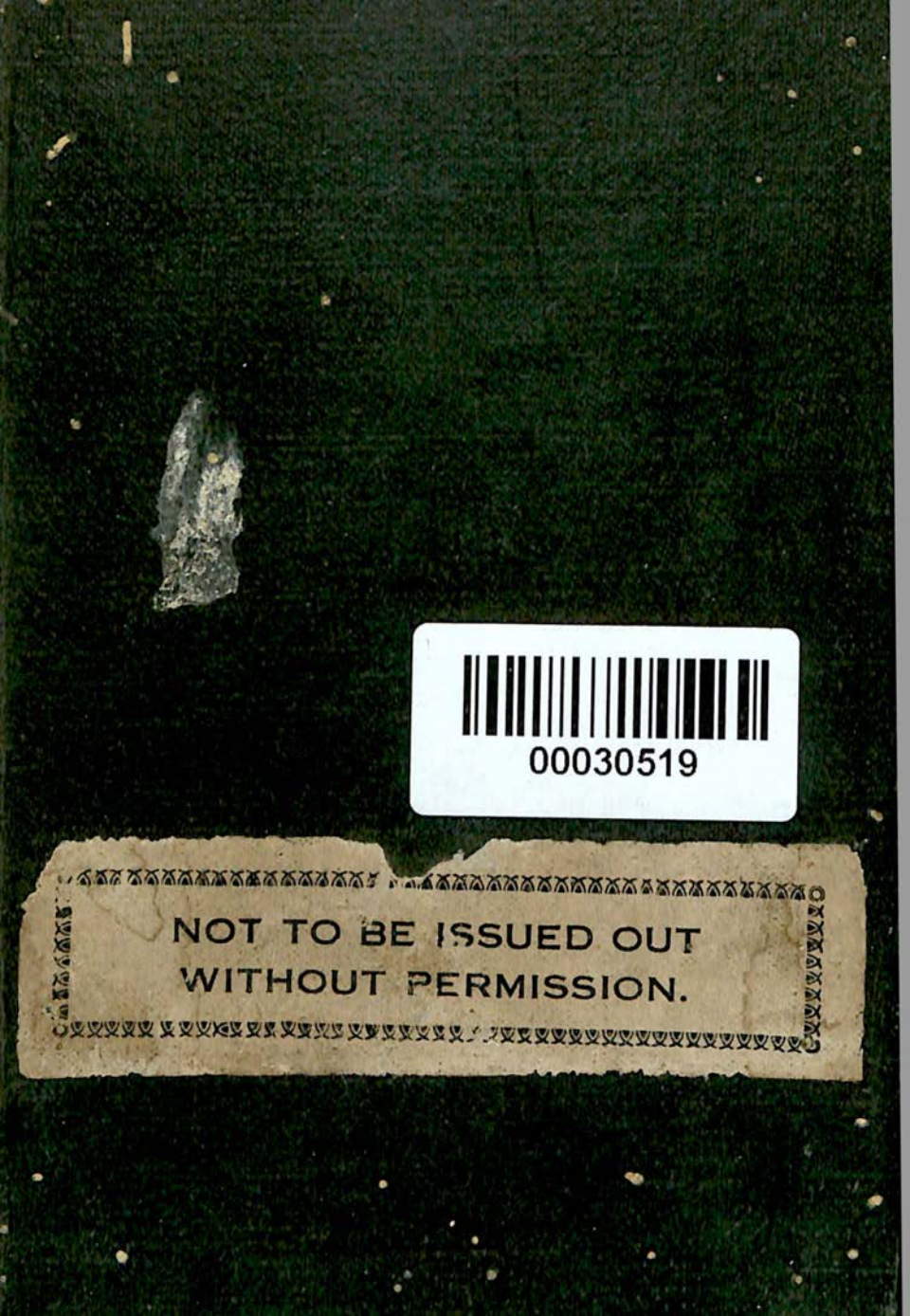
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HISTORY OF FRANCE

BY

G. W. KITCHIN, M.A.

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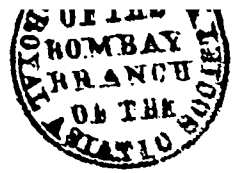


THE BOURBON MONARCHY: ITS RISE.

A.D. 1598–1660.

CHAPTER IV.

RICHELIEU. A.D. 1624–1635.

HENRY IV in his day had tried to solve the pressing European problem, How shall religious toleration be granted, so as to preserve national unity? The freedom claimed for opinion had already split up the unity, such as it was, of Germany; it threatened that of France. The resistance to this claim by the House of Austria led to the breaking up of the Spanish power, chiefly by creating a free confederacy round the Rhine mouths and sandy coasts of Lower Germany; a little later, the same resistance in Germany brought on the Thirty Years' War, with all its long throes, ending in an equilibrium of exhaustion. In France it had caused, in large part, the miserable Civil Wars, which Henry's firmness had quelled at last; it had yet to face the disturbances which at once sprang up, now that the weak hand of Louis XIII had grasped the helm; it was destined to receive a solution, decisive if not satisfactory, at the hand of the great Cardinal Richelieu. 'Old thoughts[1] which had been abandoned in England in the sixteenth century were at

[1] Gardiner, The Thirty Years' War, p. 69.

issue with new thoughts which would hardly be adopted in England before the eighteenth': and it is this fatal clash of new and old, irreconcileable, moving in different worlds of thought, which in France has led to despotism, followed by Revolution. During the time with which we now deal this movement became a struggle of the nobles of France first for their old feudal independence; then for what we may call governmental or departmental independence; and lastly, when they failed in this, the nobles were fain to descend from a struggle for power to a prayer for privilege. Consequently, France in the eighteenth century shows us a nobility enjoying vexatious and senseless immunities, while its real power is almost entirely gone. When the spirit has thus evaporated, leaving but the lees, it will not be long ere the wine is contemptuously thrown away.

France, as we have said, with her central geographical situation, and her strong Catholic neighbours, might be, as she chose to act, either the heart of European politics, or only one member of a great Catholic group of kingdoms: if she fell to the latter position, it would be by courting the friendship and advancing the plans of the Austro-Spanish House. The former was clearly her true policy; it would weld the monarchy at home into a compact whole, and at the same time encourage the disruptive tendencies on every frontier. This view of her best interests had been lost sight of since the murder of Henry IV, and the Catholic powers had made the best use they could of a period in which France was paralysed, if she did not actually go over to their side. But as time went on the dullest minds began to be alarmed: even the pious wish of Louis XIII to prove himself deserving of his title of 'Most Christian King' ceased to mean a quiet acquiescence in the daily growth of his neighbour's power. For two or three years the policy of the Court of France, which had already become less Spanish after Concini's death, seemed to oscillate; in 1623 some slight help had been sent to the struggling foes of the House of Austria, though it was done in a hesitating way, as by one timidly changing his political front, and not sure of

his steps. The keen sight and cool hand of Richelieu were still to come. And it was time they came: for the Austro-Spanish power had sprung up again with amazing vitality. The first period of the Thirty Years' War was over, and Germany seemed prostrate at the Emperor's feet. The position was like that of Charles V after Mühlberg; the Princes were crushed; Electors were made and unmade at will by the Imperial fiat; Frederick, Elector Palatine, was degraded, Maximilian of Bavaria promoted: the Austrian troops, overrunning the Rhine-Palatinate, shook the French King's faith in the wisdom of his course. The Austrians were now masters of the Rhine from Basel to Emmerich; war had again broken out in the Low Countries in 1621, which were torn to pieces by religious and political factions; the whole of Italy, except Venice, lay at the Spaniards' feet; they had seized the Valtelline, and so secured their communications with Austria and Germany. The English Court, in its eagerness to reinstate the Elector Palatine without having to fight for him, seemed to have forsaken its old French alliance and to have turned to Spain; the Prince of Wales, men learnt with anger and surprise, was making a romantic journey to Madrid to win a Spanish bride[1].

In Germany the Protestants were destined once more to be saved by the dissensions between the Catholic Princes and the Imperial power, between Tilly, the Princes' general, with his Jesuits, and Wallenstein, the Emperor's, with his astrologers: in France it is a Cardinal who will arrest for ever the triumph of the Church, set his country into its right course, and lay the foundations of the peace of Europe.

There were two ways by which the Spaniards could get round France, and make a land-route to the Netherlands, now that their

[1] 'L'affaire de la Valteline, celle d'Allemagne, la liaison d'Espagne et d'Angleterre, la nécessité des Pays Bas, le mauvais traitement que reçoivent les Suisses, l'extrémité où sont les Liégois, étant choses de si grand prise à la France et en état si avantageux pour l'Espagne.' Richelieu, Mémoires (Petitot, II, vii. p. 283).

sea-route was become precarious through the rise of the two maritime powers. The one way was by the Savoyard passes, across the Rhone somewhere between Lyons and Geneva, through Franche-Comté and thence into Alsace, or across the Rhine, and so down the territories of the German Princes to where Cleves borders on the Netherland Provinces. This road however was barred, first by uncertainty as to the friendship of the Duke of Savoy, who could never, thanks to his geographical position, be depended on, and secondly by the foresight of Henry IV, who, in obtaining Bresse and Bugey, had completely blocked the way. This route was therefore of little avail; and there was but one other.

That grand range of Alps, which we see stretching for leagues along the northern horizon as we travel down the Valley of the Po, divides northern from southern Europe as with a wall of iron. There were in it few passes available for troops in the seventeenth century; those at the western end were in the Duke of Savoy's hands, and the easier ones at the eastern end were commanded by Venice: between the two there was but one great valley which did not lead directly into Switzerland;—and that was the Valtelline. Due north of Milan lies the lovely lake of Como, stretching far up into the hills: from near its northern end the Valtelline runs away to the east, towards the great mountains: out of it one pass, high but not difficult, communicates with the Engadine, and thence with the Grisons, while another road leads the astonished traveller over great heights into the Tyrol[1].

Henry IV, foreseeing the importance of this roadway, by which so many a sturdy Swiss had already descended to seize the spoils of Italy, or to take service with the Venetians, had long ago secured it by an alliance with the Leaguers of the Grisons[2], to whom the Valtelline was then subject.

[1] The Stelvio would not have been practicable for armies in the sixteenth century.

[2] There were three of these Leagues: the Graubund proper (1424) (whence the Canton takes its name), head place Ilanz; the Gotteshausbund,

In 1620 an explosion took place. The Italian-speaking inhabitants were strict Catholics; the Grisons across the mountains talked German or Romance, were Protestants, and treated their subjects harshly: with the approval of Federigo Borromeo, Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, cousin and successor of the great S. Carlo Borromeo, and also a strong supporter of the high Catholic party, the Italians of the Valley, whose grievances were aggravated by the encouragement of the two prelates, broke out into a frightful massacre. On a certain day and hour every Protestant found in the valleys was ruthlessly murdered, and the independence of the district was forthwith proclaimed: it was formed into a democratic republic, in opposition to the aristocratic republicanism of the Grisons: the Duke of Feria and the Spaniards at once supported the revolt; German and Spanish troops occupied the strong places in the valley, the four Valtelline forts of Morbegno, Sondrio, Nova, and Riva.

In vain were negociations carried on at Madrid, and the new King Philip IV even signed a treaty[1] to replace everything in the state it was in before the outbreak; the French King, traitor to himself, added a secret clause, that he would undertake to break up the alliance between the Grisons and the Venetians, a stipulation which, if carried out, would have utterly neutralised the treaty. No one listened to the voice of negociation: the Grisons took up arms; the Spaniards resisted, occupied the 'two jurisdictions'; it seemed as if the Grisons would have to submit. These things at last aroused Louis XIII, the war-party friendly to Spain having lost ascendency at the time of the peace of Montpellier[2]; and he listened to the counsels of the Duke of Savoy, and the Venetian ambassador.

the 'Ligue Cadée' (circ. 1401), head place Chur; and the Zehengerichte (1436), head place Davoz. These three formed themselves into a single confederation in 1471, allied themselves with the Swiss Cantons in 1498, and became to a great extent dependent on them. In 1798 they were actually admitted into the Helvetic body, and since that date have formed one of the Swiss Cantons. For a short account of them see Richelieu, Mémoires (Petitot, II. vii. p. 309).

[1] 25 March, 1621.

[2] See above vol. ii. p. 498.

Early in 1623 an alliance was signed, engaging France to enter vigorously into the struggle for the restitution of the Valtelline. Hereon the Spaniards, not wishing to push France into an unfriendly position—France neutral being so great a help—offered (thinking to secure their object just as well) to hand over the Valtelline forts to the Pope in deposit, till terms could be come to; and this was done just before the death of Gregory XV. France subsided; and in the interval of quiet Gregory died, and was succeeded by Urban VIII, that 'temporal Prince,' whose sympathies and thoughts were opposed to the Spanish domination. In France Richelieu was called to the King's counsels, and in a very few months became supreme at the Board: he began by a new and strict chamber of justice, which was intended to pull the state out of its financial and social wretchedness; and cautiously at first, but firmly, set himself to resist the overpowering pretensions of the Austrian and Spanish thrones: these, in closest harmony of religious and political aims, menaced once more the liberties of the world.

When Richelieu became master of the fortunes of France, he was thirty-nine years of age. Sprung from a noble house in Poitou, he at first followed his father's profession of arms, and was soldier long enough to learn much that was afterwards very useful to him. We shall see him, a Cardinal, acting as commander-in-chief; nor did he ever forget his earlier calling, sedulously as he fulfilled his clerical duties. Before however he had time to see much of warfare, his career was changed: his family seeing his great powers, thought the Church a better field for his ambition than the camp; his elder brother, then holding the Bishopric of Luçon, which was a kind of family benefice, resigned that charge in his favour, and thereon the young soldier passed from State to Church, and was consecrated Bishop when only twenty-one years old. We have already seen him at the States General of 1614, then befriended by the Queen Mother and the Concinis; at last, after ten years of cautious dealing, he now sets his foot on the pinnacle of his ambition.

There stands this foremost figure of the age, looking even

younger than he was. His form was slight, and his health was always frail and delicate. His portrait by Champagne in the Louvre, a masterpiece in its kind, shows us a tall figure, with long thin hands, flexible, eloquent and tenacious; his face is eminently characteristic, marked and pointed, with a long high-backed nose, inquisitive and masterful; his eyes, a little closed, veil their lord's will, yet see all that passes; his white hair, combed back, and covering his ears and neck, is silky and sparse, and betokens the ecclesiastic, while his little sharp-pointed beard and well-trimmed moustache seem to denote the statesman and soldier. Behind this delicacy of frame and feature lay an iron will and pitiless nature, a swift clear-seeing intelligence, a sleepless vigilance and subtlety of mind which carried him safely through many a crisis. He was surrounded with a network of spies and corrupt agencies; he thought all men had their price. He never wearied of work, and his work lay in many different lines; he could guide the destinies of nations in the morning, and write indifferent verses in the afternoon; or, seated amidst his authors, sketch out the plots of a play for them to fill up afterwards. There was in him a vein of personal vanity which led him to aspire to eminence where a greater and less self-conscious man would have felt no temptation. His patronage of the drama begins the period of French literary history in which the stage takes up a prominent position,—when playwrights are the comrades of kings, and a tragedy can convulse the political world, or a comedy throw all society into agitation. With Richelieu comes in that era of the drama which, drawing its first inspiration from Spain, rises to the dignity of an expression of national life in Corneille[1], flavours the despotism of the 'Great Monarch' in Molière, and shakes the tottering state when Voltaire wields the pen.

It is not easy to determine what power Richelieu had at the opening of his ministry. While under the Queen Mother he had gone with those who favoured the Spanish policy; when

[1] Corneille's first piece, a comedy, was played in Paris in 1629.

he came to stand by the King the Court was fluctuating between the two parties and lines of action: the King, left to himself, being a strict and narrow Catholic, would doubtless have preferred the friendship of Spain to an alliance with the Protestant powers. But circumstances and the general tendencies of the time were too strong; and Louis XIII bowed before them. We cannot tell how much of truth there may be in the statement that Richelieu laid before his young sovereign the full-formed plan of a policy opposed to Spain. It is hardly likely that, to use a modern phrase, the new minister 'came in to carry out' a new line of political action. His Memoirs, it is true, which obviously aim at drawing a coherent and favourable view of his whole career, tell us that in an almost theatrical interview he unfolded to the astonished King a perfect scheme of policy, convinced him of the justice and necessity of it for France, and at once seized complete ascendency over the royal mind. It is more probable—and also more in accordance with the facts—that Richelieu, for the first and second years of his ministry, was far from omnipotent, was crossed and thwarted by hostile influences, and even compelled to follow the course he did not approve, as at the Peace of Monzon in 1626.

Few characters in history are so difficult as that of Richelieu. The Memoirs of the time seem written only to mislead: those which bear his name were composed under his eye, with a special view to his reputation in time to come; they are accordingly almost valueless as evidence respecting the man, useful as they are for political study and for facts: the Rochfort Memoirs[1], bright and amusing, are nothing but a romance of adventure; the other documents of the time are partisan-writings: the interesting Life of Father Joseph[2] was written after 1689, and is a malicious panegyric. Nor can we clearly make out the springs of policy and action. The Cardinal

[1] 'Mémoires de Mr. L(e) C(omte) D(e) R(ochfort) contenant ce qui est passé de plus particulier sous le Ministère du C. de Richelieu et du C. de Mazarin.'

[2] Printed in the Archives Curieuses, 2de Serie, tom. iv.

wraps himself in mystery; we cannot tell how far that hard cold force, of which we are conscious, influences the world, nor indeed do we know what it is like: to add to the difficulty, we discern behind him his double, 'two heads under one cowl,' as men said: Father Joseph is the great intriguer and negociator, though not, as some have affirmed, the real statesman of whom the great Cardinal was only the agent and mouthpiece. Though we cannot sever them, their lives being bound up together for good or ill, it is quite clear that after Father Joseph dies in 1638 Richelieu's severities are not relaxed, nor his policy changed or weakened, nor his ascendency shaken. It is true that the grey Father was no mere secretary or mere ambassador; he was a man of rare ability, able to give sagacious counsel; yet he cannot be regarded as the true centre of his age; that glory posterity has rightly reserved for his great master, Richelieu. Still, as we study these men, we grope in mysterious gloom, and are tempted to say with the author of the Life of Father Joseph that 'ordinary history is like the face of a clock; we see the hands that move and mark the time, but not the wheels and secret springs whereby it goes[1].'

Remembering then these uncertainties, we must deal modestly with the Cardinal's career, for we can never be quite certain as to our judgments respecting it. We may, however, without hesitation divide it into periods, studying it in parts and detail, and endeavouring, at the end, to sum up our impressions of the man and of the great results of his life's labours.

These periods will be four:—

(1) The Valtelline period, from 1624 to 1626, ending in an apparent collapse of all attempts to resist the Austro-Spanish power, at the Peace of Monzon; during which time Richelieu seems scarcely to have seen his way clearly. (2) The period of La Rochelle, from 1626 to 1628, during which Richelieu strains every nerve to crush all independent spirit and resistance at

[1] Vie du Père Josef, Archives Curieuses, 2de Série, tom. iv. p. 129; we must not flatter ourselves, with the writer, that his book 'supplies the lack of ordinary history, and serves to content our curiosity.'

home, seemingly in harmony with Spain against the Huguenots, and turning a deaf ear to the loud outcries of the German Protestants. (3) The years 1629 to 1635 see the Cardinal master at home, and resolutely entering on that course of policy by which he finally triumphed in Europe, though as yet he interferes only as a secondary power in the Thirty Years' War; for this is the period of Gustavus Adolphus and the Swedes in Germany. (4) The fourth and last period, 1635 to 1643, ends his career; it is the time when France interferes as a principal in the war, and lays the foundations of that aggressive policy which marks the reign of Louis XIV. The great Cardinal's work is carried on to its triumphant close, so far as foreign affairs are concerned, by Mazarin in the Peace of Westphalia (A.D. 1648) and in that of the Pyrenees (A.D. 1659).

I. *The Valtelline Period.* A.D. 1624–1626.

When Cardinal Richelieu was called to the King's counsels, he begged that he might remain in the background; for his health was frail, and often failed at critical moments; much standing, as before kings, exhausted his strength; he would gladly give quiet advice from behind, and leave to others the dignities, the fatigues, and wearing cares of office. This could not be: the King insisted, and La Vieuville, under whose patronage he had been brought forward, welcomed him into the Cabinet. Even at this time men's eyes were fixed on him; he was 'refined up to two-and-twenty carats,' as a pamphlet of the day says[1]; it was hoped that, like Cardinal Amboise, minister of the well-loved Louis XII, Richelieu would resist the Spanish domination. In the King's Council, or inner cabinet of six persons, three at least, Lesdiguières, Constable of France, La Vieuville, and Richelieu, were opposed to Spain. But La Vieuville was not fitted by nature for the chief place; he was

[1] In the 'Voix publique à Louis XIII,' in Cimber and Danjou's Archives Curieuses, 2me Série, ii.

rash, violent, unpopular, and corrupt. He soon had to give place to Richelieu, henceforth the virtual head of the Council. La Vieuville, thus supplanted, had been the first to reverse the ruinous Spanish policy of the Court: he had welcomed the English envoys, after the failure of the Spanish marriage-project, wrecked on the Palatinate difficulty[1]; he had promised help to the Dutch, to Mansfeld, to the Elector Frederick; in a word, his policy had been the forecast of that of the Cardinal, who owed his rise to him, and now stepped nimbly over his head into his place.

England had declared war on Spain: France joined England in renewing the old offensive and defensive alliance with the Dutch, England promising men and France money. Even the Queen Mother was led to suspend her Spanish likings, by the hope that her third daughter, Henriette Marie, would ascend the English throne. A marriage-treaty was drawn[2], and England for the time sided with those who were resisting Spain, while she was debarred from encouraging the Huguenots at La Rochelle.

The Austro-Spanish power had greatly increased during these years: its successes had enabled it to knit together all the provinces which owed it allegiance. The Palatinate and the Lower Rhine secured their connexion with the Spanish Netherlands, as we may now begin to call them, and threatened the very existence of the Dutch: the Valtelline forts, as we have shewn, were the roadway between the Spanish power at Milan and the Austrians on the Danube and in the Tyrol.

Richelieu now resolved to attack this threatening combination at both critical points. In the North he did not propose to interfere in arms: there others should fight, and France support them with quiet subsidies and goodwill. He pressed matters on with the English, the Dutch, the North German Princes; he negociated with Maximilian of Bavaria and the League, hoping

[1] The English Court having made the restoration of the Palsgrave Frederick a necessary condition.

[2] But not signed, thanks to delays at Rome, till 12th December, 1624.

to keep the South German Princes clear of the Imperial policy. James of England, ignorant of the true bearings of foreign politics, and intent only on the restoration of the Count-Palatine to his Electorate, did little but hinder the just progress of affairs; for not daring to lay the marriage-treaty before Parliament, he could not summon the Houses to meet, and consequently got no supplies. Count Mansfeld, with twelve thousand English troops, finding that money failed from England, and that the Cardinal peremptorily refused him leave to cross France on his way to the Palatinate, was fain to do as Richelieu wished, and to turn aside to the Low Countries, where he was joined by two thousand French volunteers; and though he failed to relieve Breda[1], which fell before the arms of Spinola (June, 1625), he came opportunely to the help of Frederick Henry of Nassau, who on the death of his great brother Maurice, in April, 1625, had taken on his worthy shoulders the burden of the war. Thanks to their union the progress of Spinola was arrested, and a great peril averted.

The French ambassador at Copenhagen, well supported by the English envoy, Sir Robert Anstruther, at this time organised a Northern League, headed by Christian IV of Denmark, a prince who has had hard measure dealt him by both fortune and history. He was Duke of Holstein, and therefore a German Prince, a member of the Lower Saxon Circle; his interests at Bremen and Verden led him to resist the Austrian power, which refused to guarantee the continued possession by a Protestant power of those secularised Bishopricks. Hitherto the war in Germany had been between the Imperial power, supported by the Catholic League, and the Calvinists, headed by Frederick the 'Winter-King': now the Lutheran Princes, alarmed at the threatening aspect of affairs, were beginning to think that they had made a mistake in leaving the Palatinate to be conquered; and turned a more willing ear to

[1] It is probable that King James, who had no wish for war with Spain, held his troops back from anything that might bring on a collision with Spinola. Ranke, English History, i. p. 535 (Oxford translation).

the French and English proposals for this Northern League. Gustavus Adolphus, the great King of Sweden, and brother-in-law of George William, Elector of Brandenburg, had been also asked to help. But he, with better knowledge of the greatness of the undertaking than was shown by Christian, made proposals which by their magnitude alarmed the allies; and the Danish King, whose demands were far less, was accepted as head of the League. The event showed that the Swede was right. Two men only, in all Europe, Gustavus and Richelieu, seem to have had a just opinion of the great task before them.

By 1625 the Cardinal's plans in the North seemed to be going well: the North-Saxon Princes, though with little heart and much difference of opinion, specially in the cities, had accepted Christian IV as their leader; and the progress of the Spaniards in the United Provinces was checked. In the other point to which Richelieu's attention was directed, matters had gone still better. The Valtelline had remained, in spite of all remonstrances, in joint-occupation of the Pope and the Spaniards. Richelieu, never attacking in full face if he could carry his point by a side-attack, allied himself with Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, and with Venice; he easily persuaded the Savoyard to threaten Genoa, the port by which Spain could penetrate into Italy, and her financial mainstay. Meanwhile, the Marquis of Cœuvres had been sent to Switzerland, and, late in 1624, had persuaded the Cantons to arm for the recovery of the Valtelline; then, heading a small army of Swiss and French, he had marched into the Grisons. The upper districts held by the Austrians revolted: the three Leagues declared their freedom, the Austrian troops hastily withdrew. Cœuvres at once secured the Tyrolese passes, and descending from the Engadine by Poschiavo, entered the Valtelline: in a few weeks the Papal and Spanish troops were swept out of the whole valley, abandoning all their forts, though the French general had no siege-artillery with which to reduce them. The Spaniards were infinitely annoyed and mortified at the blow: Urban VIII showed little or no resentment. He saw how

strong this new power in France was becoming; he had at heart no wish to be overshadowed by Spain: the mission of Father Joseph to Rome, in the matter of the Papal dispensation for the English marriage, had already half-won him: the skilful proposal of the crafty Capucin for a new Crusade to the East[1], led by a hundred Capucin friars, had dazzled the Pope's imagination, and led him to believe that so enthusiastic a Churchman as Richelieu was sure to be a true friend to the Papal power: Urban's position as a temporal prince, all-important in his eyes, was likely to be improved, if he could neutralise the too-great influence of Spain. The establishment of the Duke of Nevers in Italy, with his splendid pedigree and shadowy claims as 'successor of the Palæologi[2],' was regarded as the first step towards both ends; that is, as the beginning of the Oriental Crusade[3], and as, still more, the first solid resistance to the Spanish power in the Peninsula. It was soon seen that the Crusade was but a dream: still, the astute Father Joseph succeeded in using it against the Austrians and Spaniards.

Early in 1625, the Valtelline being secured to the Grisons and French, the aged Lesdiguières was sent forward to undertake the rest of the plan, the reduction of Genoa. But just as things were going well for the party in Europe opposed to Spain and Austria, an unlucky outburst of Huguenot dissatisfaction marred all: Soubise in the heart of winter had seized the Isle

[1] For some brief account of this scheme see Martin, Histoire de France, xi. p. 213. note 1.

[2] Charles I, Duke of Nevers, grandson of Louis of Gonzaga, son of Frederick Marquis of Mantua, regarded himself as heir to Mantua and Montferrat; as descended from the Courtenays he was connected with Constantinople: and one of the Palæologi in the fourteenth century had by marriage obtained Montferrat: his line ended in 1533, but one of his nieces married the Frederick mentioned above, and thus connected the house of Gonzaga with the Palæologi; in 1565 the Duchy of Nevers passed by marriage to the Gonzagas.

[3] This scheme was much mooted as early as 1618: it is curious that in connexion with it comes up our old friend 'Prester John,' 'la cour du Prête-Jan, autrement dit le Soldan d'Éthiopie.' Vie du Père Joseph, in Cimber et Danjou, 2 Série, iv. p. 139. The name was clearly used as a generic title. It was understood that this scheme was to be first applied to an attack on the Austrian house, and failing that on Palestine. See Cimber et Danjou, pp. 146, 147.

of Ré, and had captured in Blavet harbour on the Breton coast six royal ships; he failed however to take the castle which commanded the place, and was himself blockaded, escaping only with heavy loss. Thence he seized the Isle of Oléron: in May the Huguenots were in revolt in Upper Languedoc, Querci, and the Cevennes, led by Rohan on land, and Soubise by sea. Their rash outbreak came opportunely to the aid of the distressed Austrian power, their true enemy. Although very many of the Huguenots stood aloof and refused to embarrass the government, still enough revolted to cause great uneasiness. The war in the Ligurian mountains was not pushed on with vigour; for Richelieu could not now think of carrying out the large plans, which by his own account[1] he had already formed, for the erection of an independent Italy: 'the true secret of Italian affairs is to eject the King of Spain and put in his stead the princes and potentates of Italy, whom the instinct of self-preservation would have held together . . . France would seek herein the diminution of Spain as her only share of reward[2].' He was for the present content to menace Genoa, without a serious siege.

At this time James I of England died, and the marriage of the young King with Henriette Marie was pushed on. In May Buckingham went to Paris to carry her over to England; he tried in vain to persuade Richelieu to couple the Palatinate with the Valtelline question; the Cardinal was cautious, for in this visit Buckingham inspired in him no confidence, irritated and annoyed Louis XIII, and laid the foundations of that ill-feeling which for a time prevailed between England and France.

After this the tide of affairs turned sharply against the Cardinal; while Tilly with the troops of the Catholic League, and Wallenstein, the new general of the Emperor, who begins at

[1] Mémoires, i. (Michaud, II. vii. p. 329).

[2] Martin holds that Richelieu aimed at restoring the ancient frontiers of France, 'Confundere Galliam cum Francia' (if we may quote from a very doubtful document, his so-called 'Testament'), and that his was the complement of the theory of Henry IV, who wished that all French-speaking men should be Frenchmen. These are the two elements of the modern theory of nationalities. Martin, Histoire de France, xi. p. 216, note 2.

this moment his brief and marvellous career, easily kept in check the Danes and their half-hearted German allies, Lesdiguières and the Duke of Savoy were forced by the Austrians and Spaniards to give up all thoughts of success in the Genoese country, and the French were even threatened in Piedmont and the Valtelline. But the old Constable of France was worthy of his ancient fame; he drove the Duke of Feria out of Piedmont, and in the Valtelline the Spaniards only succeeded in securing the fortress of Riva.

Richelieu felt that the war was more than France could bear, harassed as she was within and without, and undermined as the ground was by the Spanish faction at Court, which, headed by the Queen Mother, and seconded by the Jesuits, had great influence over the King. Richelieu saw that an attack of the illness to which his feeble health was prone might at any moment throw the King entirely into the hands of his foes, and reverse the whole policy of France. In the autumn of 1625 the King called together an assembly of notables at Fontainebleau, to which came the usual shadow of a Parliament: the princes, dukes, peers of France, great officers of the Crown, the presidents and proctors-general of the sovereign courts, the Provost of the Traders of Paris, and four prelates named by the assembly of the clergy. It was announced by Richelieu that the clergy would bear the whole cost of reducing the Huguenots, so that the King's resources were free for foreign war; menaces of vigorous action were thrown out; and under cover of them the Cardinal skilfully negociated for peace. He was determined to free his hands in Italy, to leave the war to work itself out in Germany, and to bring the Huguenots to reason. He would have liked to accomplish this by friendly dealing and peaceful agreement with them; but his embarrassments were great; the King was fanatical against them, and they, or at least the Rohan party among them, were set on relieving La Rochelle from the domination of Fort Louis, which was garrisoned with royal troops and commanded the harbour. The joint fleets of Soubise and of La Rochelle had driven back the King's ships, and

had taken Ré and Oléron; but in their attempt to force an entrance into the harbour of La Rochelle they were defeated by Montmorency, who now commanded the royal fleet: the islands were retaken, and the Huguenots sued for peace. It must be remembered that the bulk of them did not agree with the Rochellois, and were quiet through this time.

Early in 1626 the treaty of Montpellier granted a hollow peace on tolerable terms to the reformed Churches; and soon after, two draft-treaties having been first rejected by Richelieu's influence, because they were utterly illusory, peace was signed with Spain at Monzon in May, 1626. All was done so silently that the interested parties, Savoy, the Venetians, the Grisons, knew nothing of it till all was settled: on Buckingham, who was pluming himself on having forced Louis XIII and the Huguenots to make peace at Montpellier, the news fell like a thunderclap. Peace between France and Spain was the greatest mishap that could have befallen him: he felt himself cheated and outwitted, his hopes of vengeance on Spain were shattered in a moment. The Valtelline remained under the Grisons, with guarantees for Catholic worship; France and Spain would jointly see that the inhabitants of the valleys were fairly treated: the Pope was entrusted with the duty of razing the fortresses: Genoa and Savoy were ordered to make peace. It was a treacherous affair; and Richelieu comes out of it but ill. We are bound, however, to remember the time, the pressure exerted by the Queen Mother and her Spanish friends, the underhand character of all negociations, the selfishness which ruled all parties and almost all statesmen; above all, the desperate straits into which the Cardinal had come. For the eventual safety of France and Europe it was quite necessary for him to extricate himself. And his nature led him to do it skilfully, secretly, with cynical contempt for his old allies. Yet it must be noted that Richelieu, at the time and afterwards, declared positively that this peace was not of his making. True: Bérulle and the Spanish faction at Court made it; yet the Cardinal accepted and adopted it, and used it.

To all appearance it reversed his whole policy. The Protestant party in Europe was cheated, abandoned; the Austro-Spanish alliance courted; the Huguenots were about to feel the Cardinal's heavy hand. In reality it gave him time to bring his true policy into play; he did but fall back in order to make that wonderful leap forward which changed the whole face of European politics.

II. *The Rochelle Period.* A.D. 1626–1628.

Years ago, Richelieu, as yet the obscure young Bishop of Luçon, pacing up and down with his friend Father Joseph, had speculated on the struggle now about to begin, and in particular they had discussed how the stiffnecked Huguenot refuge, the neighbouring town of La Rochelle, could best be subdued. The Capucin, with his wild crusading schemes, and the Bishop eager to crush the heretics of France, seemed scarcely the men destined to be the champions of the Protestant policy in Europe. Yet it was to this that their speculations and aspirations directly tended. So clearly did even Spain herself feel this, that she was willing at times to help the heretics of La Rochelle in their struggle for independence and free exercise of their religion[1].

Even before La Rochelle allowed her impatience of Fort Louis, a constant and grievous menace at her gates, to lead her into open war, the Cardinal found himself surrounded by intrigues which threatened his destruction and that of the King. Louis XIII, sickly, narrow-minded, illiberal in thought and act, cross-tempered and unfriendly, contrasted but ill in the courtiers' eyes with the lively Gaston of Orleans his brother, whose very vices were such as they loved. The Court-ladies, foreshadowing the days of the Fronde, imitating the faults of the old times of Catherine dei Medici, were at the bottom of a fresh conspiracy. Henceforward the influence of women in

[1] As when she supported Rohan with money and even made a kind of treaty with him in 1628.

the history of France becomes almost uniformly baneful. The whole affair turned on the proposal to marry Gaston to the wealthy heiress of the House of Montpensier, a proposal supported by the Queen Mother and Richelieu: the other Court-ladies, for one reason or another, violently opposed it, and carried with them Gaston himself; he was led by Marshal Ornano, who was infatuated by a passion for the fair princess of Condé: the Duchess of Chevreuse tempted the young Count of Chalais, at the time chief favourite of Louis XIII, to join the conspiracy. It was very formidable from the importance of the personages implicated, their nearness to the King, the far-reaching character of their schemes. It was proposed, it is said, to shut up Louis in a monastery, and govern in his stead: to marry, on his death which might come at any time, the Queen to Gaston; Richelieu should perish. The plot had wide ramifications: it was known, more or less, at the Spanish and English Courts, in Savoy, and elsewhere: the Savoyard envoy was specially anxious that Richelieu should be murdered. Some hints, if not clear proofs, could not fail to reach the Cardinal; he alarmed the King, who had Ornano thrown into the Bastille. Gaston was furious; vengeance was vowed against Richelieu; Chalais and his friends offered themselves to dine with him, intending to assassinate him at his own table. But Richelieu was on his guard, and with consummate coolness defeated the plot. Chalais, seeing detection before him, gave way and made a full confession: Gaston passed from gross insults to abject submission and sacrificed his friends to save himself. He was too near the Crown to be punished; a reconciliation followed; Ornano died in prison, no one knows how. The ramifications of the plot had already been followed out; the Duke of Vendome, 'César Monsieur,' as men called him, indicating his royal origin, and alluding to the hopes of Gabrielle that he would one day be King of France, had been imprisoned and deprived of his government of Brittany; his brother the 'grand prior[1]' of France fell with him; the Count

[1] A title of honour given to the holder of certain great benefices.

of Soissons and Condé were also punished. The Duchess of Chevreuse was banished; the Queen herself was openly rebuked and reproached by the King and Richelieu. The jealous temper of Louis once aroused served both to secure the Cardinal's ascendency, and to keep his antagonist Buckingham out of France. Louis, these things quieted, presided over the Estates of Brittany, and heard from them a declaration that they prayed the King never to set over them as governor any descendant of their ancient Dukes: they would be henceforth Frenchmen, and nothing else. With these words the long isolation of Brittany came to an end: it was, as Ranke says, 'a true epoch in the history of France,' a proof, if need were, that the consolidated and united monarchy must prevail. The Estates went farther; they besought the King to demolish the fortifications of towns and castles, which were but so many barriers against true national unity: the prayer was gladly granted; and to the great joy of all France, the Breton strongholds were at once dismantled. Slowly this great reform would spread across the country; the downfall of La Rochelle was but an episode in it; after a time there will be no stronghold within the realm, but chains of frontier-fortresses, a menace to neighbouring nations, a defence at home; it is the true preparation for the policy of Louis XIV, the policy of making 'France one huge central fortress, compact within, and terrible to all without.'

It may be true, as has been said by Avenel[1] and Michelet, that the Cardinal 'had no bowels of mercies, and loved not the people': yet his policy, if not his feelings, made him wish to relieve the French people from some of its burdens. That he accomplished but little in that direction, beyond the overthrow of the feudal castle, is true enough: his energies were taxed, first to reduce the malcontents at home, then to carry out his gigantic schemes against Austria. Yet he had time to sketch out the policy which as a beneficent despot he desired to follow: only, as is too often the case with beneficent despots,

[1] In his admirable collection of Richelieu's Letters.

he never remembered that theories are best tested by being carried out in practice. There exists in his own handwriting a detailed project on domestic reforms: he wished to abolish the annual dues, to put an end to purchase of appointments and hereditary places, to let many offices die out, and so relieve France from the burden of them; we know that he actually did get rid of those great dignitaries, the Constable and Admiral of France; he proposed to reduce privilege and exemption, whether feudal or bureaucratic. Thus the administration, which by usurpation, by purchase, or by hereditary succession, had become a kind of private property, would be once more thrown open to merit; finance-officers would be checked, as under Sully; even Church-abuses diminished[1]. The breadth of the Cardinal's views may be seen in his dealings with the Assembly of Notables sitting in 1626; finance, the position of the monarchy, the army, the creation of a new navy to cope with Spain and England, the relief of the lower nobles, as a counterpoise to the greater, were all passed in review: a policy of strict protection was regarded as the true means of restoring the prosperity and finance of France. Prohibition of foreign merchandize, and the nursing of home-products by government, have ever been the machinery by which France has proposed to compete with her neighbours in material well-being: from Louis XI to our own days she has again and again tried the plan, with some successes, and inevitable failure in the end. In all these things, Richelieu shadowed out a plan of a popular-absolutist monarchy, under which a happy people, free from the vexations of feudal or official rights, should be ruled by a generous prince, who should in turn be guided by a wise statesman[2]. The theory was impossible with so narrow a monarch as Louis XIII, was partly tried and proved to be a failure under Louis XIV: it received its full development in the hands of Napoleon.

[1] Ranke, Französische Geschichte, ii. p. 212.

[2] How far was he in earnest? Michelet, who hates him, sneers at it all. Henri IV et Richelieu, p. 403: 'Un projet superbe de réforme utopique.' . . . 'cet âge d'or sur le papier,' p. 405.

The treaty of Monzon had paralysed the foreign policy of both France and England; and Germany felt the results. Christian IV did his best; and Count Mansfeld, after his kind, 'a mere rolling-stone,' seconded him: but in 1625 an entirely new power had risen up in Germany. Wallenstein had undertaken to raise, discipline, organise, and lead to victory a new kind of army, an imperial army, costing the Emperor nothing, independent of the Empire; and this promise he had already begun to fulfil. He was no German, but a Bohemian; his brilliant career was as much an object of suspicion and dislike to the Catholic princes as that of Gustavus Adolphus, his greater rival, was to the Protestant. Yet his influence, for the time, was decisive: when the campaign of 1626 began, Wallenstein and Tilly made firm front against Mansfeld and Christian of Denmark. No French help came; and England, thanks to the well-founded distrust in Parliament of both Charles and Buckingham, sent scarce a tithe of the subsidy she had promised. Mansfeld was beaten at Dessau on the Elbe, and forced to abandon all thought of combining, if indeed he wished it, with the Danes: he was driven towards Silesia, and thence, followed by Wallenstein, found his way to Bethlem Gabor. There Wallenstein watched and wearied him. Bethlem made peace; and Mansfeld, unconquered save by disease, succumbed. Meanwhile Tilly, reinforced by part of Wallenstein's army, had caught the Danes at Lutter: the battle was long and hot; towards the end old discontents and jealousies broke out; the Germans would not fight without pay, and, thanks to English Charles, no pay was to be had. The Danish King was utterly defeated; and Wallenstein, who had swiftly returned from Hungary, drove him to the north. Tilly overran Hanover, Wallenstein seized Pommern and Mecklenburg, and pursued the luckless King through Holstein to the sea (end of 1627). Ferdinand, the Emperor, confiscated the two Duchies of Mecklenburg, and gave them to his general Wallenstein. What Richelieu could do, when he was able to look round about him, was but little. He encouraged the Dutch; negociated between

the Elector Palatine and his Bavarian rival; but the terms he obtained were such that England rejected them with scorn, and a coolness between the two nations gathered strength. No worse persons could have been entrusted with the destinies of nations than the narrow Catholic Queen of England, Henrietta Maria, and the frivolous un-English Buckingham. The anti-Protestant policy followed by the Court, which took the form of alliance with France against the Huguenots, had been most unpopular in England; now, to avenge himself on the French and Henrietta Maria, and to recover his foothold at home, Buckingham set himself to oppose the Franco-Spanish alliance: the Queen's Catholic household was dismissed; the King was irritated by her foolish acts; and a fine fleet was prepared as a menace against France. The French and Spanish Courts replied by a secret project of invasion: Spain to attack Ireland, France to land in the Isle of Wight, and occupy the southern counties. Such secrets are ill-kept, and hints at least—perhaps Spain managed that it should be so—reached the English Court. Then all broader views of politics were thrown aside: the English people wanted to assert their Protestantism, and how, save by the championship of the Huguenots? Buckingham longed to vex the French Court; pique, vanity, a fancied love-affair, the desire to gain the popularity he could not deserve at home, were among the many motives attributed to him. And so war was begun with France; the King's favourite, commanding the fine fleet, set sail from the English shore. It was an alarming moment for France: Rohan was moving in Languedoc, Savoy and Lorraine menaced their respective frontiers, the Emperor was known to have schemes for the recovery of the Three Bishopricks, the English fleet was on its way towards La Rochelle, and at home Anne of Austria and the Court-party were their guilty accomplices. Had Buckingham sailed straight to the mainland, and landed near Fort Louis, he would have found it quite easy to pluck out that thorn in the side of La Rochelle; for it was almost defenceless, most of its garrison having been carried over to the Isle of Ré. But the

English fleet was directed by double interests, and failed accordingly: Buckingham was more anxious to secure Ré and Oléron, as a menace at once to France and Spain, than to help the Huguenots. So he sailed to Ré, and his failure before S. Martin saved Richelieu. The true stuff of a soldier was not in Buckingham[1]: S. Martin, which was the key of the island, bravely defended by Teiras, stood out against him. The defence was far more vigorous than the assault: Richelieu himself found the money needed to revictual the place: it was felt that La Rochelle went with Ré. Unheard-of efforts were made; the Cardinal's ardour spread to the troops; he was seconded by his clerical lieutenants, Sourdis, Bishop of Maillezais, and 'general of the galleys of France,' Father Joseph, the Bishop of Mende, and others[2]. At last Schomberg with six thousand men sailed from head-quarters, between Oléron and the mainland, broke through the English fleet, and threw ample supplies into the citadel of S. Martin: a fierce battle ensued, in which Buckingham was defeated with great loss; he was fain to reimbark, and set sail for home (Nov. 1627). The English flags taken from Buckingham were displayed amid great rejoicing in Notre-Dame on Christmas Day: Paris saw in it a proud victory over her rival, on that rival's own element.

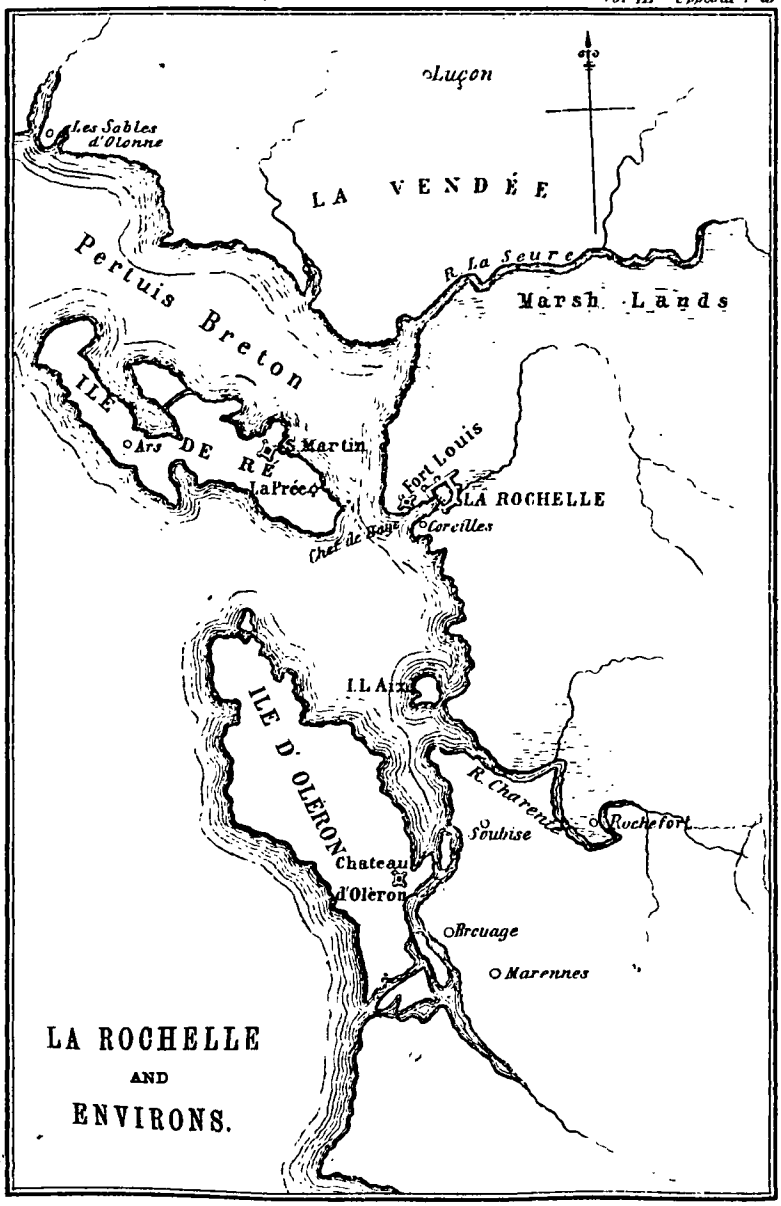
Before this had happened, the people of La Rochelle, after some hesitation, and not forgetful of the old fable of the horse

[1] 'Il fut dit au Roy que le duc de Bouquinquan estoit homme pour ne sçavoir ny combattre ny fuir.' Cimber et Danjou, Archives, 2me Série, iii. 80.

[2] One of the satiric writings of the time hits the clerical character of Richelieu's government well. We must remember that these were not all contemporaries:—

'Un archevesque est amiral (Sourdis Archbishop of Bordeaux).
Un gros Évesque est caparol (the Bishop of Chartres).
Un prélat préside aux frontières (the Bishop of Nantes).
Un autre a des troupes guerrières (the Bishop of Mende).
Un capucin pense aux combats (Father Joseph).
Un Cardinal a des soldats (the Cardinal de la Valette).
Un autre Cardinal est généralissime (Richelieu).
Mais, France, je crois qu'ici bas
Ton église si magnanime
Milite, et ne triomphe pas.'

Quoted by Robson, Life of Cardinal Richelieu, p. 482.


Luçon
Les Sables d'Olonne
LA VENDÉE
R. La Seure
Marsh Lands
Pertuis Breton
ILE DE RÉ
Ars
St Martin
La Prée
Fort Louis
LA ROCHELLE
Corcilles
Chef de Baie
ILE D'OLÉRON
Chateau d'Oléron
Soubise
R. Charente
Rochefort
Brouage
Marennes
LA ROCHELLE
AND
ENVIRONS.

and his rider, had at last made a treaty with Buckingham, in which he bound himself not to retain the Isle of Ré or any forts on the mainland after the war had ended. La Rochelle, stubborn and rebellious as she was, was no traitor to France. Rohan had also raised the standard of Huguenot revolt in Languedoc. They were now met by the iron will, the long-enduring patience, the fertile resources of Richelieu. It may be to our eyes the saddest part of his history, this destruction of the Huguenot power; yet it showed off his high qualities to the most advantage, for it was also the most critical moment of his career. Neither he nor his King had declared war on the stubborn town without much reluctance; they would gladly have avoided it altogether; but, once declared, it admitted of no half-measures and must be carried through.

And, in truth, La Rochelle had long been a sore trial to the French monarchy. Planted not far from the mouth of the Loire, with a splendid outer and inner harbour on a dangerous coast, sheltered by the Isles of Ré and Oléron, La Rochelle had long been the true capital of the Huguenot party in south-western France. She had a splendid harbour, with a fine land-locked bay as the outer roadstead, and safe and tranquil pools as her inner docks or harbourage; she was built in a crescent round the head of this bay, on the shores of the little tidal river which runs into it. Outside the walls the banks of the river formed a salt marsh, which adds to the strength of the place. The country generally is marshy and the coast barren and sandy. With its strong walls, and its harbour open, the place could well defy a siege. She had stood hot attack in 1572, and had beat back the royal arms; had she but command of the sea, she was deemed impregnable. Her position was a menace to Spain; from her the cruisers could cut off the Spanish commerce, and retire safely home; she was the best point for English interference in the South of France. Often had she tried the patience of her kings; against Louis XI she had espoused the cause of his brother Charles of Berri; when Charles VIII and Louis XII were in Italy

she had been restless behind their backs; when Francis I was in the thick of the struggle with Charles V, she had caused him no small anxiety; she had gone with the Huguenots against Charles IX and Henry III; under Henry IV she had been quiet, but now that Louis XIII had endeavoured to curb her with Fort Louis, she broke out once more into stubborn resistance, and was willing to shake the State to its foundations.

Standing almost alone, as she did, La Rochelle was still very formidable; the siege taxed all the energies of the Cardinal and his ecclesiastical lieutenants. For this siege, in which, as he said, 'he had to conquer three kings, France, England, and Spain,' Richelieu set aside all other work, concentrating himself on it with the force of a strong and clear-sighted nature, which sees where the key of the position lies, and is determined to get possession of it. For this he shut his eyes and ears to the death-struggle in Germany and to the menaces of Austria directed against the three Bishopricks and Champagne[1]; the intrigues of Spain, which he knew, he seemed to forget; the treachery of Lorraine and Savoy passed unnoticed; Rohan's rebellion in the South (Montauban, Querci, Rouergue, and Upper Languedoc) was watched and restricted, not crushed; he did not even molest the reluctant nobles in the royal army, who said with Bassompierre that they would be fools indeed were they to let the Cardinal take La Rochelle. The camp was a pattern of all military virtues; the army was trained to do what the nobles hung back from; never were troops better cared for, or the country round less harried and annoyed; the camp, as Richelieu says, 'was a convent,' the siege a great 'act of faith.' The clerical captains, the Capucins gliding from tent to tent, the conversions of Huguenot gentry announced from time to time, leave on the mind the impression of a religious rather than a political event. Yet no siege ever did more for the vanquished party; the fall of La

[1] Richelieu, Mémoires (Michaud, II. vii. p. 474).

Rochelle securing the eventual defeat of the High Catholics of Austria and Spain. Richelieu himself became general, chief engineer, pay-master; he gathered and reviewed troops at the headquarters at Marennes, near the Isle of Oléron; he sent orders for the founding of cannon, drew out the lines round the town, and projected with help of engineers the great mole which at last broke the town's heart. And all this while his power hung on a thread; one disaster, a high tide with a westerly gale, or a vigorous English admiral crushing the weak sea-power of the French, might at any moment have ruined his siege and him. So long as he could keep Louis XIII in the entrenchments and amuse him with warlike shows and dangers of war—for the King was fearless enough, and liked to hear the bullets whizz—he was tolerably safe; but after the King wearied of the monotony of the long siege, and had escaped back to Paris, the Cardinal could not have had a moment's peace of mind. How could he tell whether at any hour some malign influence might not shake Louis' trust in him; and then down would come the whole fabric of his ambition and his policy. So anxious he was that when the King left the camp he determined to go with him, and to entrust the siege to his lieutenants; Father Joseph however with greater prudence persuaded him to stay, for to have gone would have let operations slacken, and probably fail; and then the outcry of his enemies would have destroyed him. And it was in truth a turning-point; all France was in ferment: Montmorency in Languedoc was discussing revolt with Rohan; Guise and Richelieu were enemies; the people of Bordeaux listened to Epernon, perhaps had a friendly feeling for the neighbour-port of La Rochelle; the Duke of Orleans was a known foe to the Cardinal, personally and politically; disturbances were to be expected from the side of Lorraine and from Savoy, whose Duke was in communication with Buckingham. These all had one first aim, the overthrow of the great Cardinal[1]; and he seemed

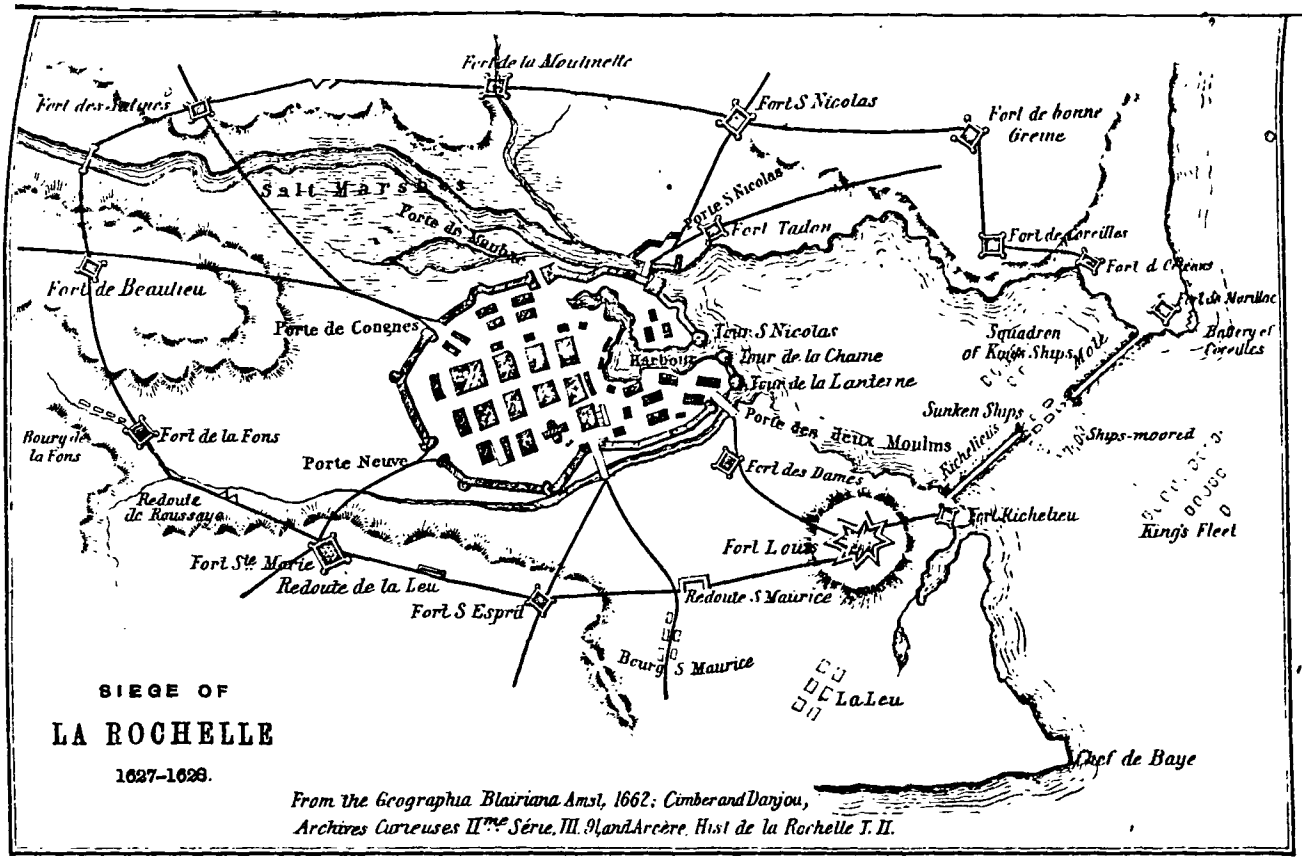
[1] Ranke, Franz. Geschichte, ii. p. 246, 247.

to have no support except the uncertain good-will of the King, who might change at any moment, or might die [1], and his own dauntless spirit and military and political genius.

The Cardinal, unshaken by the dark storms brooding round him, brought his forces up under the walls of La Rochelle, strengthened his position at S. Martin, on the Isle of Ré, and drew a cordon of forts, connected by a single earthwork [2], round the beleaguered town; from sea to sea this chain was about nine miles long, cutting off all approaches, and by the fort at La Fons intercepting the supply of pure water. No attempt at a regular siege with approaches in form was made. A surprise or two was tried, but was found useless, and the attempt was never repeated. Richelieu saw he must starve the place out. While the harbour-mouth was open this could never be thoroughly accomplished; and to this gigantic task the Cardinal now set himself. An elaborate floating bar, a chain laid across vessels and rafts, and stretching from shore to shore, failed altogether. It was then decided to close up the harbour mouth with solid stonework. From the point of Coreilles, with infinite toil, and more than one defeat from the winds and tides, a mole or jetty was thrown out some seven hundred paces towards the opposite shore; whence, to meet it, another mole of four hundred paces was thrust out. The whole breadth of the harbour-mouth is here seventeen hundred paces, so that there was after all a distance of about six hundred still open; and here the water was so deep as to make it impossible to fill up the whole entrance. Vessels filled with stones were sunk in the opening; and a large number of ships, bows outward, were lashed together, and made fast to the ends of the mole, so as to close the opening with a kind of floating and armed bridge. It is said that Richelieu pleased himself with the thought that he was emulating Alexander's great work at Tyre. Inside the harbour there lay a small squadron of the royal fleet, to watch

[1] He had been very ill just before this time.

[2] There was no danger of a relief by land, and the cordon was very slightly drawn. See Plan.



SIEGE OF

LA ROCHELLE

1627–1628.

From the Geographia Blairiana Amst, 1662; Cimber and Danjou, Archives Curieuses IIme Série, III. 9 and Arcère Hist de la Rochelle T. II.

the inner harbour, and see that the Rochellois did not sally out to burn the moored ships; outside, the main body of the fleet cruised, between the harbour and the islands, keeping watch and ward against the English ships which were daily expected. This great feat of engineering skill and dauntless patience was completely successful. Twice the English came and strove to relieve the town; they tried to blow up the barrier by means of some primitive torpedoes;—a tin box full of powder was placed on a willow log, and launched at the ships. The powder was so arranged (the contrivance is not explained) that when the log drifted with the tide against the moored vessels, it should at once explode. The machine failed to work, and did no mischief; after a sharp attack, against which Louis XIII exposed himself recklessly to fire, the English sailed away, leaving the town to its fate. The citizens, after heroic efforts, saw themselves wasting with famine. They sent their starving women and children out of the place to the royal lines: but Louis XIII had none of his father's kindly heart, which had led him to pity the poor Parisian fugitives; he coldly drove them back to the walls of the perishing town. At last, after fourteen months of siege, and eleven of blockade, La Rochelle capitulated, 30 October, 1628. The church of S. Margaret was reconsecrated, and Richelieu performed Mass there on All Saints' Day: the King had already made his triumphal entry. In the siege fifteen thousand had died of famine; hardly a man at the end had strength to lift a pike: it is said that there were only one hundred and thirty-six men in the place able to bear arms. The dead lay unburied in the streets; for none had strength to carry them out; the living were like 'forpined ghosts'; 'everywhere, in a word, La Rochelle presented the sad image of death[1].' The Cardinal remembered that La Rochelle in her worst strait had steadfastly refused to become English or to sell herself to Buckingham: accordingly the terms granted were not harsh: no severe punishments followed; the Huguenots

[1] J. de Serres, Inventaire general de l'Histoire de France, p. 1073 (ed. 1640).

were allowed the exercise of their worship; but the proud and independent spirit of the town was broken, her walls thrown down, the towers being left standing, her prosperity destroyed, her privileges suppressed[1]. Guiton, her heroic defender, was exiled for a time, then recalled and made captain of a ship of war. The fall of La Rochelle roused the patriotic feelings of the country. In Paris it was regarded as a great triumph over England; 'formerly England was an evil beast,' they said 'now she is well-bridled and broken in,'—she was clearly no longer what she had been under Elizabeth.

Richelieu wished to make the town an Episcopal See, and to appoint Father Joseph the first Bishop; but the astute Capucin refused the mitre now, as once before at Albi: every one believed, and probably with justice, that he cared for nothing in the way of preferment, except the red hat.

Never again did a French city stand up against the monarchy, till in 1789 Paris swept that ancient institution away. It was a great but a melancholy victory: for France showed that she knew not how to absorb and adopt those municipal and local liberties, which have done so much to make free nations in modern times: instead of appealing to the loyal instincts of her citizens, and enlisting them among the bravest and best defenders of the crown, France knew then, as she knows still, but one way of dealing with political opposition. It must conquer or be crushed. And the fall of La Rochelle brought France nearer to that fatal simplicity of institutions which is the pride and peril of France, and the true parent of her despotism.

[1] In the days of Vauban Louis XIV saw how important the place might become: and her walls were rebuilt, enlarged, and improved.

CHAPTER V.

III. Richelieu takes up his Position in European Politics. A.D. 1629–1635.

While preparing to relieve La Rochelle, Buckingham, when on the point of sailing, had been assassinated by Fenton. His death and the fall of the town paved the way for a reconciliation with England. Charles saw that his best policy lay side by side with France: and he made peace with her in September 1629.

La Rochelle fell not a moment too soon, if Richelieu would interfere in time in the crisis of European affairs. In Germany, while the siege was going on, the failing princes of the North had stretched out their hands in vain: Wallenstein trod them under foot with the power and scorn that come of pride and genius; his standards were seen by the seamen of the Baltic and the North Sea: as yet the jealousy and fears of the Catholic Princes of the Empire had not broken out into revolt against him. Protestant or French interests were thrust aside with contempt, and all Germany seemed to be on the point of being consolidated into an all-powerful Catholic empire. Nor were things better on the other side; the King of Spain, after secretly helping La Rochelle, was now preparing to throw off the mask, and declare war on France; he was in league with Rohan and the malcontents of Languedoc, where a formidable revolt threatened to break bounds at any moment; in Italy, the death of the Duke of Mantua had brought up new questions, which the Austro-Spanish coalition

would speedily settle in its own interests, were France only to abstain from interference: Savoy was known to favour that coalition: France was hemmed in, and girt round, from the Bidassoa to Dunkirk, by a chain of eager foes.

The old Gonzagas of Mantua and Montferrat, princes of strong Spanish proclivities, had now become extinct[1]: the new line, the Gonzaga-Nevers family, closely connected with France and supported by French sympathy and by all the foes of Spain, were naturally opposed by the Emperor Ferdinand, who, as overlord, sequestrated the Duchy and Marquisate: the Duke of Guastalla claimed Mantua; while the Duke of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel, aimed at getting Montferrat, and seemed likely to bar the way from France into Italy. Casale, on the Po, a strong place both by position and art, was the key to the whole difficulty, being then to Italy what Alessandria afterwards became: 'it was,' said Richelieu, 'the only place by which the King could succour the Pope, the Venetians and the other princes of Italy his allies, and keep in check the Duke of Savoy[2].' Fortunately for the interests of France a considerable force of French volunteers had entered Italy by the Valtelline and had garrisoned the place. These men defended Casale heroically: the Spaniards however were pressing the place hard. This was during the siege of La Rochelle; and even Pope Urban VIII had urged Richelieu to give up his plans for the downfall of the Huguenots rather than let the Spaniards become all-powerful in Italy. But the clear eye of Richelieu saw that the garrison of Casale would hold out yet a while; and he contented himself with letting its defenders know that help would come at last, and they, trusting him, kept up good heart: now that tidings of the fall of La Rochelle had reached them, they felt certain of relief. The stout walls and brave hearts of Casale turned the tide of European politics.

[1] Vincenzio Gonzaga Duke of Mantua and Marquis of Montferrat died childless in 1627; his next of kin was Charles of Gonzaga Duke of Nevers. See above, p. 14.

[2] Richelieu's Memoirs (Michaud, II. vii. 574).

While he sent Charnacé, a new and most successful diplomatist, to the north of Europe, to check the onward movement of the Austro-Spanish successes, and to enter into communication with Gustavus Adolphus, Richelieu bent all his energies to the more pressing task of relieving Casale. It was no easy matter; for the Queen Mother, who instinctively took the wrong side—there are always persons whose opinions may be taken as sure indications of what one ought not to do or think—and who hated the Gonzaga-Nevers family heartily, was eager for the success of Spain and the weakening of France; she vehemently opposed the proposal that the King should interfere in Italian affairs. Richelieu however was now all-powerful with Louis. After his great triumph at La Rochelle, Louis XIII was willing to undertake anything: he was naturally fond of the excitement of warfare, and showed best in the presence of danger. And so he was easily persuaded to take the command and to march, in the very depth of winter, for the Italian frontier. Great was the amazement and even the consternation at Madrid, where men looked daily for the courier to bring news of the fall of Casale, when tidings came that Louis XIII, in the middle of January, when the Alpine snows and cold were at their worst, had actually set forth [15 January, 1629] and was on his way to Susa. In spite of all obstacles, he triumphed over the natural difficulties of the road, and over the formidable barricades he found in the Passo di Susa, just above that town, where the roadway runs through a defile in which a handful of resolute men might have held their own against an army. Louis XIII thus came down into Italy, to the perplexity of Charles Emmanuel, who, following the natural policy of his ambiguous position, 'changed resolution every moment,' and could not be trusted at an arm's length. 'He was a prince who liked to have his foot in two stirrups at once; that is, to be both Spanish and French.' Susa was taken; and the Duke was fain to send his son Victor Amadeus[1] to make offers of peace.

[1] Married to Christine, sister of Louis XIII.

The King gladly consented, on condition that the siege of Casale should be raised by the Spaniards, and the place re-victualled by the Duke. The Spaniards, weak in force and ill-commanded, were little loth to break up the siege; and thus almost without a blow France triumphantly reasserted her position in Italy. Charles Emmanuel now tried to persuade the King to go farther, to declare open war with Spain, and to risk the chances of an Italian campaign. But Richelieu was not like the reckless kings who had made Italy 'the graveyard of French chivalry'; he stood firm against the temptation, content with the great triumph he had already won. He sedulously avoided the risks of drifting into a war with Spain: he negociated at Madrid, and turned a deaf ear to the Duke of Savoy. His policy was too fine to be understood at once: he kept up all appearances of strict and devout Catholicism, and appeared before the eyes of Europe as the repressor of heretics, while by a sharp side-stroke he weakened the power of Spain, shook her prestige in Italy, and attacked the jurisdiction of the Emperor over his more distant fiefs. It was a double blow, striking both branches of the great Catholic power, while still there was no war, and no one could say that Richelieu was doing more than was quite natural in a minister whose duty it was to watch over certain disputed French interests in northern Italy. A temporary peace with Savoy followed and with it reappeared a faint ghost of the old leagues between France, Venice, Mantua, and the Papacy: still, Richelieu knew that Charles Emmanuel was not to be trusted, and was quite prepared to find his slippery ally evading the stipulations of the treaty. He had accomplished what he chiefly had in view, the relief of Casale, and had got a breathing-time in which to settle the troubles of Languedoc, where Rohan was making an independent treaty with Spain: after that was done he knew he could return and set things right across the Alps. He had the keen pleasure also at this same moment not only of reasserting French influences there, but of winning a real diplomatic triumph on the other side; for peace with

England was signed in April, 1629: a treaty which was in fact a declaration that Charles of England both abandoned the Huguenots to their fate, and cut himself away from all Spanish alliances.

So now he set himself to reduce the rebels of Languedoc. The King was not unwilling to change the scene: whether as protestants or as malcontents, Rohan and Saint-André and their followers were equally odious to him: when he had taken Privas, capital of the protestant Vivarais, he treated the defenders with harsh severity. He actually wished to hang the gallant Saint-André, its commandant, and would have done so, but for the intervention of Richelieu. Louis XIII was, here as elsewhere, naturally heartless: though the Cardinal could be severe and even pitiless, when his interests or policy demanded it, he was not fond of blood, as the King was: the difference was the difference between the harshness of a strong man, who has aims which cannot be stayed by the gentle hand of pity, and that of a weak man, who enjoys cruelty for its own sake. After the fall of Privas, the Vivarais yielded; the King passed across into the Cevennes; and Rohan saw that no help could come from Spain, nor any effectual resistance be made at home. He yielded; Richelieu, following his usual plan, granted an amnesty to the rebels, but took care they should not revolt again. All their fortified places were demolished: the liberties of Languedoc, which still retained some constitutional rights, were extinguished; Montauban threw open her gates to Richelieu, and allowed her proud walls, last refuge of Huguenot independence, to fall. All means were brought to bear on the Huguenots: the zeal for achieving conversions grew daily stronger: Father Joseph was indefatigable; purse in hand he hunted down the Calvinist ministers; when force had failed or argument proved unconvincing, gold was sometimes eloquent and decisive. The Pope saw with thankfulness the success of this great crusade, and wrote in warm terms to the triumphant minister, the minister who was already preparing the overthrow of Catholicism in Europe. The first part of

the Cardinal's great task was now fully achieved: henceforth, no discord of free opinion, no local liberties, no proud aspirations of noble privilege and power, would disturb the monarchy, or thwart the minister, as he guided the intricate foreign policy of the kingdom towards its brilliant goal. Plots there might be and narrow escapes: an exile here, a scaffold there; but the real work was done when Richelieu rode proudly through the gates of Montauban, and heard its citizens make heaven ring with their cries of 'Long live the King and the great Cardinal!'

The royal army was partly disbanded: twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse were cantoned along the Rhone and Saone; for it was clear that they would soon again be needed in Italy. No sooner had the Emperor seen Richelieu, as he thought, entangled in a tedious civil war in Languedoc, than he set himself, in concert with Spain, to recover his shaken influence in Italy. Christian IV had been driven to make peace in May 1629, and a large part of the Imperial forces were set free: Wallenstein with a sufficient army remaining in the North. German troops were collected in Lindau, and marching thence in the summer of 1629 seized the Grisons and the Valtelline; a German army occupied the Mantuan territory, and besieged Mantua itself; another force of twenty thousand men, commanded by Spinola, who had been sent with a Spanish force from the Netherlands to secure the triumph of the Catholic powers in Italy, occupied Montferrat, and threatened Casale: it was known that the Duke of Savoy was in communication with them. On the other side of Europe, the Dutch rose to the surface like a cork, when Spinola, their ablest antagonist, was called away. Under the command of the Stattholder Henry Frederick[1], worthy successor of his brother Maurice, the Dutch began a new career of success with the reduction of Herzogenbusch (Bois-le-Duc); then after passing

[1] In this campaign the renowned Turenne served (as many French Protestants were doing) under the Statholder, and learnt his first lessons in the art of war.

through the struggles of the later part of the Thirty Years' War, they arrived at a solid position when it ended, though the Stattholder did not himself live to see the Peace of Westphalia.

It was clear that, if Richelieu wished to retain hold on Italy, the troops which had reduced Languedoc would soon be needed. Before the end of 1629 the voices of the Duke of Mantua, of the Republic of Venice, of the Pope himself, took tones of alarm, and France must listen and come. But the King was not strong in health, and could not well expose himself again to the rude trials of a winter-campaign in Savoy and Piedmont; wherefore Richelieu, whose ascendency grew ever stronger, in spite of the efforts and intrigues of the Court party inspired by the mad virulence of the Queen Mother, was named first the King's 'principal minister of State,' and then, a little later, 'Lieutenant-General representing the King's person in his army, at home or abroad.' With this splendid title, which seemed almost to give the Cardinal royal attributes, he set forth (29 Dec., 1629) with undaunted heart to grapple with the great difficulties that lay before him; to carry on indirect war with Austria and Spain; to make skilful use of the treachery of the Duke of Savoy; to foster the good-will of such Italian princes as the Pope; to keep the irritated Germans and Spaniards away from the borders of France; to undermine their power by skilful intrigues, by beckoning forth fresh armies from the far North, and by awakening the slumbering echoes of old jealousies in Germany itself. The years 1629 and 1630 are the busiest and most triumphant period of the Cardinal's life.

It was made matter of reproach against him and Father Joseph that in these years they set the Protestantism of Europe once more on foot, and taught it to defeat its mighty foes. It certainly was the ulterior result of the national policy; and one which, however distasteful to Richelieu's strictly Catholic feelings, was not in any sense opposed to his true policy as chief Minister of France. 'Nearest is dearest'; and in the question

of life and death to France involved in the struggle with the Catholic powers, all secondary results were disregarded: the one thing was to form a solid opposition to Ferdinand: the farther consequences must follow as they would.

So Richelieu rode out to the Army of Italy, in dress, bearing, equipments, feelings, a Marshal not a Cardinal.

He is the most brilliant example in modern times of the proverbial fascination which soldiering exerts on clerical natures. On his staff were a Cardinal and a Bishop, and three Marshals of France: he himself rode a splendid horse—no prelate's mule for him—wearing a complete harness of blue steel, with a gallant feather in his cap, and two pistols at his saddle-bow: gauntlets and helm were carried before him by his squire[1]. Thus prepared for war or for negociation, to win his ends by sword or pen, this great churchman entered the Alps, and in the very beginning of 1630 made his presence felt by the Duke of Savoy. Charles Emmanuel tried his old policy, wishing to persuade France to make open war with Spain; so that he, like another S. Pol, might balance between the two powers, and filch fat morsels now from this one now from that. But no man trusted him;—Spinola turned away, and Richelieu with a strong hand seized him. In vain the Duke and the invaders of the Mantuan territory offered to suspend hostilities, suggested terms, tried to interpose delays; in vain a Papal nuncio and legate waited on him, and Giulio Mazarini for the first time came into contact with his future master. Richelieu was not to be diverted from his aim: in March Pinerolo fell. When Louis XIII joined his triumphant army, he was gladdened by the sight of brilliant feats of war; all Savoy, except Montmélian, was subdued. An army under Montmorency crossed the Alps farther south, where the army of Charles VIII had crossed before[2], and occupied Saluzzo: the Duke of Savoy with impotent anger saw the French take possession of the district which he had won in

[1] Mémoires de Pontis, ii. 121, quoted by L. von Ranke, Franz. Geschichte, ii. 269.

[2] By S. Maurienne.

the League days, and had retained at so much sacrifice of territory in 1601. Though Mantua was taken by the Imperialists, Casale still held out; and the foolish intrigues of the Duke of Savoy enabled Richelieu to replace France in a position of vantage in Italy which she had not enjoyed since the best days of Francis I[1].

Brilliantly as the sun of success shone here, dark clouds were thickening on the side of Lorraine; and Richelieu must use all his consummate skill to ride out or to avert the storm. We must always remember that his main object was not to make war on Spain or Germany, but to defeat them without fighting. Thus far all had prospered;—how long would it continue? was it at all likely that the victorious Ferdinand would allow his great plans to be thwarted? There was obvious danger, then, from the side of Germany. The invincible Wallenstein, who looked askance at Italian warfare, was quite ready to invade France from the Rhine. Troops gathered on that ancient river, and in Luxemburg; the Duke of Lorraine was inclined for war; the Spaniards began to move in the eastern Pyrenees: Richelieu had great need to be wary.

It may be said that the foreign interests of France in modern times have centred first on her Italian frontier, next have passed to the Rhine, or to her Lorraine border, and last of all have been concentrated on the Netherland fortresses: the moment which we have now reached is the time when they pass from the first to the second, from the Italian to the Lorraine frontier. To see how this came about demands a brief glance at German affairs.

After driving Christian IV back to the north Ferdinand made peace with him at Lubeck (May, 1629). The Danish King recovered his possessions, with the stipulation, readily enough agreed to by him, poor King, smarting from the wounds of war, that he would meddle no more in German affairs. Then

[1] L. von Ranke, Franz. Geschichte, ii. p. 271.

Ferdinand set himself to carry out his great schemes, with Wallenstein as his chief instrument: he wished to make of Germany one great hereditary monarchy: with utter disregard of the feelings of the Diet he had deposed the Dukes of Mecklenburg, and had given Wallenstein their Duchies as well as that of Friedland (A.D. 1628). The great general's haughty and reserved manners, his contempt for the princes of the empire, the savage lawlessness of his army, struck terror into the hearts of even those who had helped to drive out the Dane. And now Ferdinand, full of zeal for the Catholic cause, issued, by his sole authority, the famous Edict of Restitution (March 9, 1629), which ordered the restoration of all Church property secularised since the Peace of Augsburg[1] (A.D. 1555), an order which deeply affected the fortunes of the North German Princes, especially of Brandenburg and Saxony: it also limited the benefit of toleration to the Lutherans, leaving out the 'Reformed' or Calvinistic Princes and Churches. All these things combined to fill the Princes of Germany, whether Catholic or Protestant, with forebodings: it was but natural that the old spirit of resistance, so stubborn under Charles V, should spring up again.

This antagonism took two forms: in the North it brought out the latent power of Sweden, in the South, at the Ratisbon Diet, it led to that explosion of resistance which overthrew Wallenstein. Wallenstein, the warlike Richelieu of German absolutism, was far less sure of his ground, and far more formidably opposed than even the great Cardinal was; his aims too were more personal, less single-minded: the Cardinal wished to raise the Monarchy, and to rise with it, and could repress the great nobles as traitorous towards the crown: but Wallenstein aimed at becoming a great noble on the ruins of

[1] The Peace of Augsburg confirmed to its possessors all ecclesiastical property, confiscated before the signature of the Peace of Passau (1552) but only so far as those possessors were Lutherans. See Dumont, Recueil des Traités, IV, Part iii, p. 88, and Heeren, Political System of Europe etc., pp. 47–94 (Eng. Trans.).

an older family of nobles; and thereby put himself in direct comparison and competition with the old nobility of Germany, a blunder which Richelieu never committed. He had no independent standing-ground when the anger of the Princes was aroused against him and the support of his master withdrawn.

Richelieu attracted the attention of all Europe, and the armies of Austria and Spain, by his splendid and theatrical entry into Italy; and like a skilful conjuror, who makes his audience look to one side, while he plays his trick on the other, the Cardinal at the same moment carried out his most brilliant diplomatic triumphs in both the Protestant north and the Catholic south of Germany. To both points, to the King of Sweden, and the Diet at Ratisbon, Richelieu sent his most trusted agents. Charnacé, who already had been travelling about among the North-German princes, and had brought back reports of the greatness of the 'Lion of the North,' was sent to meet Gustavus Adolphus. This envoy, a kinsman of Richelieu, and a man of singular skill and address, carried all before him. He first negociated a truce for six years between Sweden and Poland, and thus having relieved the Swedish Monarch from anxiety on that side, called his attention to the dangers he was in from the overwhelming power of Austria, and of Austria's general, who had already received the title of 'Admiral of the Baltic Sea, and the Ocean.' Gustavus Adolphus also thought that affairs were in a most critical state, and readily accepted the proposed alliance with France[1]. It was believed that many of the German Princes, Catholic as well as Protestant, would welcome him as a deliverer[2]. France agreed to pay Gustavus a large subsidy for five years; the Swede promised to respect the empire, and leave the Catholics unmolested: this treaty re-echoed the toleration which now prevailed in France; it was approved of even by Pope Urban VIII.

[1] Agreed to in 1630, but not signed till early in 1631 at Bärenwald.
[2] Richelieu, Mémoires, tom. iv. p. 402.

While this formidable antagonist was gradually developing his greatness, and laying the foundations of his career in Germany, Ferdinand, as if all resistance was at an end, busied himself, after the programme he had laid down, in getting from the Diet the ancient title of 'King of the Romans' for his eldest son: it was a title which carried with it a presumptive claim to the Imperial diadem at its next vacancy. For this end he called together a Diet of the Empire at Ratisbon, in June 1630. Thither came in crowds the discontented Princes, full of suspicions, very unwilling to concede the point. Thither came also Father Joseph, devout, his head buried deep in his Capucin's cowl; he was the greatest of Richelieu's lieutenants, the head of that Capucin police, that great spy-agency, by which the Cardinal was so well served. This great master of intrigue and diplomacy set himself at once to sow discord between Duke Maximilian of Bavaria, the head of the Princely party, and the Imperial Court. Maximilian was brave and stoutly Catholic, but neither firm nor foreseeing. To Father Joseph he listened readily;—what but good counsel could come from under so saintly a cowl?—from him he learnt, first, how important France might be to the Princes, as a counterpoise to Austria, and secondly, that all the German Princes were interested in clipping Wallenstein's wings, specially the Electors of the Holy Roman Empire, 'in spite of whose august beards' the Duke of Friedland might actually make himself Emperor some day[1]. The Princes were quite ready to think any evil of him as an ambitious upstart: the Emperor seemed to have no farther need of him, his confidence in him was perhaps shaken:—what if Wallenstein seized the prize he wanted for his own son? Consequently, that he might secure the much coveted title of 'Rex Romanorum' for Ferdinand his son, he consented to sacrifice his great captain, who had restored the authority of the Empire even to the northernmost limits of Germany.

[1] 'A la barbe des Electeurs,' says the Vie de Père Joseph.'

So Wallenstein fell: he was in fact the price paid by the Emperor for the younger Ferdinand's succession to the Imperial throne, a price which, after all done, the Electors refused to pay.

At the very moment when Wallenstein, victim of these princely jealousies and of his master's ingratitude, retired in dignified anger to Bohemia, that other consummate captain of the war, the only man who could rival the soldierly skill and splendid political vision of Wallenstein, Gustavus Adolphus, had actually landed in Pomerania (24 June, 1630).

The Ratisbon Diet went farther, and protested against the war in Italy, and the attack on the Duke of Mantua. Ferdinand, discerning that things looked ominous in northern Germany, acceded to the wishes of the Princes, hastened to make terms with France, promising to secure Charles of Nevers in his Duchy, and releasing Casale, which was in the uttermost peril; for the Germans and Spanish had already won the town and castle, and were pressing the citadel very hard. Richelieu professed great anger at this first treaty of Cherasco (6 April, 1631), for he feared lest it might cool the King of Sweden's friendship; but he did not disavow it: the need of concentration on Germany, the peril of Casale, above all the alarming state of Louis XIII, who was likely to die any day, and so to end the Cardinal's career, induced him to accept, if he had not actually arranged, what had been done.

The war in Italy came to a close in a most dramatic manner. The French army at Casale was actually drawn up in battle array against the Austro-Spanish forces, and a cannonade had actually begun, when Mazarini, the Pope's agent, at risk of his life rode in between the combatants, waving a paper, and crying, Peace. The impending battle was arrested, and the great siege of Casale came suddenly to an end: the incident attracted the attention of all Europe, and proved to be the beginning of the fortunes of the chief actor in it, the future Cardinal Mazarin. The Austrians evacuated the Man-

tuan territory, the Spaniards Montferrat, the French Piedmont: by a second treaty, signed soon after with Victor Amadeus, the new Duke of Savoy, Richelieu secured Pinerolo to France, and, by a stroke of successful diplomacy, made himself more formidable than ever to the Imperialists in Italy.

This was perhaps the highest triumph of Father Joseph's skill as an ambassador, though he never rested till he died (in 1638). It is impossible to say with the Italians[1], that Richelieu owed everything to him; that Father Joseph not only strengthened him in all the crises of his fortune, and gave him wise advice, but that he even invented his policy for him, and supplied him with ideas: yet we must admit that Richelieu owed more to him than to any other person, and that he was thrice happy in such an agent and friend. Yet the difference between them is great: Father Joseph lives in history as an able intriguer; Richelieu as a King among men.

Meanwhile a striking drama had also been played out in France. A few weeks after the startling appearance at Casale of this 'Signor Mazarini' with his tidings of peace, the French army was thrown into still greater amazement: a courier arrived post haste from France with a despatch, signed by Louis XIII, and addressed to Marshal Marillac; it named him sole commander of the Italian army, and recalled La Force and Schomberg, the other generals, who were friendly to Richelieu. The rumour ran at once through the camp that the great Cardinal had fallen; that he was disgraced and deposed, and the Queen Mother triumphant. Before however any action could be taken, another courier, the very next morning, came in with fresh despatches under the King's hand, addressed to Schomberg, containing an order for the arrest of Marillac, who was to be sent at once a prisoner into France.

[1] Siri, Memorie Segrete, tom. vii. says that Father Joseph was 'conscio non solamente delle più arcane intenzioni del Cardinale, ma mente suprema e regolatrice delle medesime in tale faccenda, et fabro e proponitore di tutte le negotiationi d'Almagna e del Norte.'

These two contradictory orders were two successive waves sent forth from the opposing currents running in the French Court, and expressing the violent disturbance which was taking place there. For the 'Day of Dupes' had come and gone: the most critical hour in Richelieu's history had passed, and he was firmer than ever in his seat.

The Queen Mother, Mary dei Medici, steadfastly holding by the high-Catholic and Spanish party, had determined to have one great and final struggle with Richelieu, and to overthrow him. She was supported by a formidable party: Gaston of Orleans, contemptible enough in himself, was yet the heir to the throne, and no one thought Louis could live long. Beside him she had at her back the great House of Guise, Epernon, Bassompierre, Créqui, and the two Marillacs, the Marshal, and the Keeper of the Seals. The relief of Casale and peace in Italy had brought things to a point. Nevers, her foe, was to be secured in Mantua by the Emperor's hand: the renown of the Cardinal was daily growing, as success attended the French arms and negociations. But Casale being out of peril, Louis XIII could now no longer allege that the Cardinal was essential for him and for France: Richelieu's very success, they thought, might be turned to his ruin. The Queen Mother, however, though she held the place of Catherine dei Medici, had little or nothing of her finesse, her self-control, her high intelligence: she was a brutal and violent woman, a fanatic and partisan. Her means were singularly ill-chosen: she thought that she could overbear the weak King by violence;—she had heard Richelieu scold him like a boy; and had observed that the Cardinal's influence had not suffered from his plain speaking. She determined that she too would speak out, and did so with emphasis and oaths. The King seemed to yield to her fierce and brutal invectives, to the storm of passion with which she overwhelmed the Cardinal. Louis retired from her presence in great agitation: and the Queen Mother, following up her advantage, drove him to sign the first of the two despatches, which was instantly sent off to Casale. No sooner

had Louis rid himself of the storm by signing the document, than he rode off to Versailles to hunt, hoping thereby to calm his troubled spirit, to be rid of the turmoil in the quiet of the woods, and in the excitement of the chase to forget his faithful servant. Catherine dei Medici would never have lost sight of one of her sons for a moment; but Mary, blinded by triumph, stayed behind in Paris, that she might enjoy her success: it cost her dear. The obsequious friends who thronged to pay her court at the Luxembourg heard how the Cardinal was down: how the dreadful scheme of the Cardinal's party, which embraced not only the marriage of Madame de Combalet, Richelieu's niece, to the Count of Soissons, but the deposition of Louis XIII, the seizure of the throne and the setting thereon of the Count and his new spouse, had been defeated by the plain speaking of the Queen Mother: how the two Marillacs should now rule the state, the one at home, the other in the field: how the Spanish alliance should flourish and carry all before it: how the despatch had been already sent off to Italy: how the proud Cardinal had hastily packed up his valuables and was perhaps even now on his way to Havre. Swift couriers sped with the tidings to all the hostile Courts, to Brussels and Madrid, to Vienna, even to Turin. But while the two Queens thus lived in this pleasant buzz of falsehoods and fatal hopes, the vigilant Cardinal had already followed his master to Versailles, and in a single interview had smitten down all their cardboard fabric. The King, who had seen clearly enough that their triumph was his own fall, threw himself entirely into Richelieu's hands: and the Queens woke up next morning to find themselves and their party the silly victims of 'the Day of Dupes[1].'

Nor was their punishment leaden-footed. The despatch to Marshal Marillac was recalled, as we have seen: the Duke of Orleans thought it well to yield; the Marshal's staff was granted to Montmorency and Toiras, to reward or to secure them: the

[1] 11 November, 1630.

Queen Mother was forced to bow her head and be silent; Queen Anne for the moment was curbed. But intrigues soon began again, and it was clear there could be no peace so long as the two Queens were together. How could they be severed? It was impossible to banish Mary dei Medici; so Richelieu hit on the simple plan of leaving Paris with the King; she, taught by her late mishap, sedulously followed: they halted at Compiègne to rest the night; long ere the Queen Mother was awake next morning, Louis XIII and the Cardinal were riding in hot haste back for Paris: they never saw her more. From Paris Louis wrote to his mother requesting her to withdraw to Moulins, with the governorship of the Bourbonnais, as a kind of honourable exile: but she dreaded anything which took her nearer to Italy, and, after a short delay and hesitation, she fled to the Flemish frontier, and took refuge at Brussels. It is said that Richelieu had given secret orders to those who had been left to watch her, to smooth away all obstacles to her escape, so greatly did he feel the relief of having her as an open instead of a concealed enemy; at a distance, not at Court. The most prominent of her ladies were exiled;—Bassompierre was sent to the Bastille: Gaston, who was making open threat of war at Orleans, had to flee into Burgundy, thence into Franche-Comté and Lorraine. The Parliament of Paris, which had shown a decided sympathy for Richelieu's opponents, was soon brought to its knees: the Duke of Guise in Provence, who was intriguing with Spain, with the Huguenots, with all who were discontented, was made to see that it was a vain attempt: Provence was pardoned and calmed by judicious handling; and the Duke himself, when summoned to Court, begged permission, instead of turning his face northwards, to go on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loretto. He saw the fair plains of France no more; for the 'King of the League' died an exile at Florence in 1640.

The Cardinal received at this time high marks of the favour and confidence of his King. He was made Duke and Peer, and Governor of Brittany. His opponents were everywhere steadily

rendered powerless. In Languedoc some relics of constitutional liberties still survived; and the Estates there, headed by Henry of Montmorency, son of the Constable of that name, one of the most brilliant and dashing of that chivalrous race, showed signs of independence. Montmorency, by tradition of his house, by personal services, by rewards and high prizes received, was bound to Richelieu and the King; but the instinct of the noblesse was too strong in him: it was whispered that a great revolt of provinces under their governors was imminent, that Orleans was to break in from Luxemburg, supported by the Duke of Lorraine and the Spanish power: a great civil war seemed once more imminent. Richelieu, however, was resolute, watchful, and swift to strike: his cool hand, pitiless, fearless, unerring, was on the conspirators ere they had time to move. The attempt of the emigrés from the north-eastern frontier failed completely. They tried Verdun in vain, and made fruitless offers to the Duke of Bouillon at Sedan; the Austro-Spanish aid on which they counted failed them. Richelieu by his second Peace of Cherasco had sundered the Imperial from the Spanish interests; and by a great diplomatic triumph had not only neutralised the hostility of the Duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus, but had secured Pinerolo, the key of the Alps. Marshal Marillac was executed; Calais, which was one of the critical points, was secured; Louis XIII gladly carried war across the frontiers into Lorraine: contrary to expectation, Épernon, the Governor of Guienne, stood firm. Schomberg was sent into Languedoc to make head against Montmorency. At Castelnaudary it came to a battle, in which Montmorency was brought down by a musket-ball, as he was leading a mad charge of cavalry against the royal troops. The modern gun, that constant foe of feudal chivalry, once more asserted its supremacy. Montmorency was taken alive, tried and executed: it is a curious trait in his character, and in that of his times, that he admired Richelieu so much as to leave to him by his last testament one of the finest pictures in his possession. His death on the scaffold closes the line of the Montmorencies (1632).

Richelieu took occasion, now that the pacification of Languedoc was complete, to remove all hostile or suspected governors of provinces, and to set his own friends in their places: there was also no small stir and change among the Court-ladies, who were always ready to form a centre for unpatriotic and dangerous intrigues.

Thus the great Cardinal triumphed over one after another: first, he trod down the independence of the Huguenots at La Rochelle: then he rescued Italy from the grasp of the Austro-Spanish power: then he defeated the party hostile to him at Court: he thrust back the emigrants, when they attacked the frontier; and now, lastly, he crushed the resistance of the governors of provinces.

It was in these days of his highest power and triumph, that Richelieu remembered once more his old literary tastes. The Gazette now first became an authorised and regular publication, parent of the modern newspaper in France: the King himself sometimes acted as editor, while Richelieu is said to have contributed articles to it. Soon after this time he established the Royal Printing-Press; and, chief among all his titles to the respect of France, he was the true founder (1635) of the French Academy, which has done so much to centralise the language of France, and to affect her literature in after ages. Louis XIII established the Academy at Richelieu's advice, as he says in his letters patent, to advance 'the most noble of all arts, eloquence' (a truly French sentiment!); 'the French tongue which has hitherto suffered only too much from the neglect of those who might have made it the most perfect of all modern languages, is still more capable than ever of becoming such,' . . . . 'to make the French tongue not merely eloquent, but capable of treating of all arts and all sciences[1]'. From its very foundation the Academy busied itself with the form of expression, rather than with the substance of things: it is the opposite of that other great creation of this age, the Royal Society

[1] Cimber et Danjou, II. vi. pp. 99–103.

of England, which has done as much to promote Baconian and scientific investigation in this country, as the Academy has done to secure a polite and well-regulated style in France. The letters-patent for it were issued in January, 1635; but the Parliament of Paris was jealous, and refused to verify them till 1637: the lawyers were suspicious of Richelieu, and even literature herself hesitated to receive the gift: the Academy was vehemently attacked in a pamphlet-war, and bore much of the odium felt for the great minister. French writers lost by it in quaintness and in originality; on the other hand, the Academy soon became the arbiter of literary praise, the measuring-rod of culture. If it has shown a tendency to exclude the highest names in letters, on the other hand it supported and guided the authorship of the age of Louis XIV and of later times. French literature long owed to this bright instrument of despotism many of its excellencies, and much success: yet it may be doubted whether the equalising of language and expression, and the discouragement of individuality, however congenial to an autocratic age, really tended to increase the true greatness of French letters. At least, the Academy was eminently well suited to the ages in which it flourished most brilliantly; and perhaps also it was congenial to the temper of the French people. The names which are great in French literature owe as little to the patronage of the Academy, as the splendid achievement of M. Littré's Dictionary does to that interminable work, the ever-unfinished Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française.

The successes of Richelieu at home enabled him to turn his attention to foreign affairs, which had now reached a critical point. The Thirty Years' War had entered on an entirely new phase: the champion with whom Charnacé had negociated was already gone, and how was his work to be carried out to the end?

Gustavus Adolphus had landed in the Isle of Rügen in June, 1630. The North German Princes, almost to a man, treated him with coolness and suspicion, as was perhaps natural;

nevertheless, swiftly and surely, he secured his base of operations on the Baltic, round the mouths of the Oder; compelled his reluctant brother-in-law, the Elector of Brandenburg, to abandon a fatal neutrality; became master of the country between the Oder and the Elbe; waited his time, encamped where the Havel joins the Elbe, till the fanaticism of the Emperor sent Tilly to ravage Saxony, and drove the wavering Elector to call in Swedish help. Then Gustavus with his grim and war-worn troops came, and utterly defeated Tilly at Breitenfeld, five miles from Leipzig[1]. That victory made the Catholic scheme impossible for the future; the cowed and cowering Protestantism of Germany, smitten with dismay by the sack of Magdeburg, once more raised its head: the league which had exiled Wallenstein was crushed: that great adventurer, dazzled by the sterling qualities of the Swedish troops and by the splendour of Gustavus, entered into communications with him, offering to join him, and to help him to punish Princes, Priests, and Emperor, if only Gustavus would take his help and not that of the French. Gustavus, however, had little in common with Wallenstein, and steadily followed the lines laid down by his own farseeing genius; lines which might have completely changed the course of Europe, had not his life been taken on the victorious though fatal field of Lützen.

Hitherto the power of Gustavus may be said to have been bounded by the Elbe: to the east of that great river all was in his hands; to the west of it, from mouth to the Bohemian frontier, all was held by Tilly. After the battle of Breitenfeld almost all the north-west was cleared: Tilly fell back with Pappenheim to the Weser; the Rhine became his line. Two paths of attack were now open to Gustavus: one through Silesia, Bohemia, Moravia, and so descending on Vienna; the other by the Rhine into Franconia and Bavaria, and thence to Vienna. The first seemed to promise swift and brilliant

[1] The battle is also called the Battle of Leipzig, but that name is wanted for another age.

successes; but it would have left an insecure rear, and a breadth of hostile territory from the Rhine to Bavaria: moreover, it is not clear that a victorious entry into Vienna would have had any great effect, or have put an end to the war. Gustavus therefore determined to adopt the latter plan, while he sent the Elector John George of Saxony to make a secondary campaign in Silesia and Bohemia: the Elector found no resistance, and entered Prague in triumph. Then Gustavus came onwards to the Rhine: he took Mainz, and passed on to Nüremberg; thence, amidst the plaudits and blessings of the German Protestants, he marched to Donauwörth, Augsburg, Munich. It was during this march that old Tilly, defending the passage of the Lech, was struck down by a bullet, and the last bulwarks of the Catholic power seemed crumbling into dust. France could but look on with uneasy fears. She had not reckoned on so great a man, or on so rapid and startling a success.

Yet France did not fail to win something, in the utter prostration and consternation of the Imperial party. Louis XIII, finding that the Duke of Lorraine meditated an attack on France (July, 1632), declared him a rebel in the Parliament of Paris, confiscated the Duchy of Bar, and occupied Lorraine. Nancy, 'fit for a three years' siege,' was abandoned without a blow: men deemed the taking of Metz by Henry II a less triumph for France. Lorraine was declared subject to the French crown: the Imperial overlordship was denied; the lilies were displayed on all public places.

While all this was going on, Spain was urging the Imperial Court to reappoint Wallenstein. After chaffering in vain with Gustavus, the great adventurer had turned to the Elector of Saxony, proposing to join him in chasing the foreigner from Germany: at the end, however, of 1631 things took a new turn; the Emperor sent to urge him once more to take the command; and after making his own terms, which rendered him a Dictator, with the brilliant prospect of becoming the founder of a new race of German Princes, Wallenstein agreed to take the field against Gustavus. The Saxons were at once cast out of

Bohemia: John George, the Elector, again began to waver between the foreigner who was the champion of the Protestant powers, and the Emperor to whom he felt bound as a German. Wallenstein, the Imperial champion, was prepared to restore the unity of the Empire; Gustavus to secure freedom of religious opinion. How could the Elector choose between two such boons?

Then followed the struggle between the two high-soaring eagles of the war, Gustavus and Wallenstein, at Nüremberg. A line drawn from the westernmost point of the Bohemian mountains to the Rhine traverses Germany at its narrowest, where broken country and great forests interpose a barrier between North and South, Low and High, Germany. The irregular course of the river Main, from its source to its confluence with the Rhine may be taken as the central dividing line between North and South Germany; it consequently has often been the scene of war. This important district is flanked by the valley of the Rhine, which runs at right angles to it; from this side Germany has ever been easily reached by France; and now the possession of Lorraine brought the French power into closest communication with German interests. If France could get across the Rhine, and hold it firmly from Coblenz to Strasburg, she might cut North Germany from South, the Elbe from the Danube, and standing there with the North to her left hand and the South to her right, might become arbiter between them, rewarding herself with a great increase of strength, territory, and consideration on her eastern frontier. To this, to the reduction of Alsace, and of the whole middle Rhenish district—the old ambition of Charles the Bold—France turned her chief attention during these years.

The wise stedfastness of Wallenstein in his Nüremberg lines wore out his great adversary's strength, and wasted his time, which to him, as to all who are worth anything, was also strength. At last Gustavus, unable to tempt Wallenstein out of his entrenchments, marched away. His rival, fearless for the South, boldly entered Saxony, ravaging as he went: and

Gustavus was compelled to give ground and follow him: so well did that great master of war handle his army, that he caught Wallenstein in his lines at Lützen; and though he fell in the middle of the battle, Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, the hero of the next period of the war, restored the fight, and inflicted on the Imperialist troops a crushing defeat.

With Lützen the age of the warriors ends; with the fall of the 'Lion of the North,' the 'Protestant hero,' fell to the ground all those great plans and purposes with which he had entered into the strife. The plans of his opponents were dead also. The Empire was but a name: the far-reaching views of Wallenstein could have no fulfilment: the dream of a great Catholic reaction and restoration was gone; there was no prospect that the Edict of Restitution could be ever carried out: the princes, more than ever, were looking to their independent interests, and though here and there one of them seemed to remember that he was a German, yet in the end they struggled each for himself, and the Swede and the Frenchman, now the principals in the strife against the House of Austria, decided the fortunes of the Empire much as they would.

So long as Gustavus lived, there had been a really religious element in the war. Keenly as he enjoyed the marvellous sense of power which every great conqueror must feel, he lets us see throughout that the fear of God ruled first in his heart: no one has ever suspected Gustavus of playing a part or of being a hypocrite: his religion was pure and simple, and a guiding-line of life and policy. But when he fell, the religious side of the Thirty Years' War drops into the background, and it takes more and more a political texture. The time of France had come.

On the one hand stood the Protestants with their mixed interests, expressed in the warm religious feeling of the Swedes, and in the desire for temporal aggrandisement, which caused the resistance of the German princes to the Edict of Restitution; on the other side, were the Houses of Bavaria and

Austria, with their strong Catholic views and hopes for a firm-built Empire: between them France now steps in, guided by Richelieu, the 'Cardinal (as von Ranke says) who of all Catholics who have ever lived has done most for Protestantism'. The Catholic-tolerant party, the old party of Henry IV, now shows its strength; it persuades men that they may cling to the old faith and yet not seek to exterminate the new; it leagues itself everywhere with the opposition to the ambition of the high Catholic power, and, in the end, brings the war to a close, in which Austria is rendered powerless, Germany diminished and weakened, and France appears triumphant and wellnigh supreme in Europe.

After the death of Gustavus the conduct of affairs lay chiefly with Oxenstjern and the great adventurer Bernard of Saxe-Weimar; but they did not act in harmony: Richelieu alone supported the Union of Heilbronn, and secured some coherence among the Protestant princes. He hoped to extend the limits of France to the Rhine, and thence to spread her influence across that great river into the very heart of Germany. The Elector of Treves had thrown open to the French the gates of his fortresses, above all he had placed in their hands the great fastness of Ehrenbreitstein, which commands the Rhine and Moselle at their confluence; Richelieu, by occupying this important position, commanded the Moselle valley, while he was already in possession of Lorraine. Montbeliard, Blavet, Hericourt, also fell into French hands; and the roadway into Alsace being thus laid open, ere long the King's troops appeared there, proclaiming their mission to be that of humane deliverers, come to free the oppressed folk now from the Swede, now from the Catholic powers. If Richelieu could prolong the war, great would be the profit to France.

The purse of France now comes into play: she is to Germany what England afterwards was, a well-head of supplies: her money upholds the Heilbronn Union, the chief princes of Western Germany are in her pay.

Wallenstein, ever scheming, entered into communications with

the Elector of Saxony, even with Richelieu. Plans of all kinds floated in the air; among them was one that Louis XIII should become Emperor and Wallenstein Rex Romanorum. The Elector of Treves tried to get Spires for Richelieu: a great partition-scheme was afloat: Bernard should be Duke of Franconia; Oxenstjern Duke of Mainz, and so on. The relations between Wallenstein and the Imperial Court, now cease to be friendly, and become cool and distant. The Spanish influence, expressing itself in the person of Ferdinand, the Emperor's son, became daily stronger at Vienna, while another Ferdinand, the Cardinal-Infant, the new Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, was thwarted by Wallenstein. In Vienna the belief grew daily stronger that Wallenstein was a traitor, that he sought only his own interests, and aimed at the crown of Bohemia. The entanglement became too difficult, and at last the Imperial Court cut the knot with the assassin's dagger. Wallenstein perished in 1634. His death was the signal for a great revival of Austro-Spanish energy, expressing itself in the battle of Nördlingen, which almost repaired for the Catholics the losses of Lützen. Franconia and Swabia fell into their hands. And now John George, the Elector of Saxony, always the waverer, instead of heading the Germanic national party in the war and trying to bring it to a patriotic close without the foreigner, abandoned the Princes, and made his own peace with the Emperor, at Prague, in 1635. It was a fatal step, prolonging the war and placing Germany at the mercy of strangers: yet at the moment the Elector believed that he had hit on the true basis for peace, and that he would enjoy the high praise of having shown the way to a German solution of the questions of the day. The Edict of Restitution was to be dropped; Saxony was to have the Lausatz; Catholics and Lutherans were alone allowed standing-ground; the Palatinate was not to be restored to its Calvinistic lords. The German princes and cities, to a large extent, acceded to this treaty, little as there was in it of a conclusive kind: it was clear however that no Calvinists could accept it: the main part of

the Heilbronn Union rejected it; such adventurers as Bernard of Weimar were not likely to be contented with it: and finally France, having long ago drawn her sword half out of the scabbard, now drew it completely forth, and entered as a principal into the struggle, making it hers for the remaining nine years of the war.

CHAPTER V.

FRANCE AS A PRINCIPAL IN THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR. A.D. 1635–1643.

IV. *The Last Period of Richelieu's Career.*

CARDINAL RICHELIEU is one of those men in whose favour the tide of affairs always turns at the critical moment, and who also have skill and courage to take it at the turn. Vigilant, cool, sagacious, and absolutely fearless, he never throughout his life missed a single point in the great game he played; and, even with dramatic force, knew how to snatch a triumph out of the very clutches of defeat. To few men could the theatrical 'Day of Dupes' have occurred: few have uncoiled the purposes of a life so steadily, in spite of opposing influences, or have left so clear a mark on the character and destinies of his country. Never did fortune favour man as she favoured him in the years 1634, 1635. His domestic enemies were for the moment cowed or exiled; and though, as he said, 'the cabinet and bed-chamber of Louis XIII gave him more trouble than all the rest of Europe,' still at this moment his hands were free, and he could attend to foreign affairs. The death of Gustavus Adolphus had relieved him of one serious anxiety; now that Wallenstein was gone, the series of great captains came to an end: the crushing defeat at Nördlingen of the Swedes under Count Horn and the Protestant Germans under Bernard of Weimar

had cleared the way for French intervention: lastly, the Peace of Prague, by drawing off the Saxons and many other German princes, obliged the Calvinists and the adventurer-captains to rely henceforth entirely on French help, and to accept, with whatever reluctance, the terms on which the Cardinal consented to fight their battle for them. Even the English, whose position was at this time very uncertain, were not likely to interfere, thanks to their home affairs, which Richelieu did his best to aggravate [1].

Richelieu had been preparing quietly for war for some years. While he had apparently been busy founding the French Academy, or harassed by the plots of the noblesse, he had steadily kept in view the coming war with Spain, knowing it to be the logical and inevitable consequence of his policy, and waiting calmly till the right moment should come. Not only was he well-prepared with warlike strength, but he had round him a band of political writers, pamphleteers on a large scale, the journalists of that day, who supported him against all attacks, who answered the libels and satires written by the exiles, especially at Brussels, and composed treatises on the claims, the rights, the future of France. With much that was exaggerated, much that was pedantic and ill-founded, these works testify to the growth in France of a distinctly national feeling, of a belief in the 'natural frontiers' of the country, and an arrogant assertion of the 'manifest destiny' of the nation. Just as the Englishman used to boast of his Empire of the Seas, or the American to foretell the unlimited expansion of the Union, so the Frenchman of Richelieu's days began to talk largely of the frontier of the Rhine, of his supremacy in Italy, of his rights to the Spanish Netherlands. One of Richelieu's friends, Jacques de Cassan, a lawyer, wrote

[1] At least so we learn a little later from that amusing historical romance, les Mémoires de M. L. C. D. R. The Count of Rochfort tells us that he himself was sent into England with despatches in cipher, which greatly encouraged the resistance of the Parliamentary party to the King. Mémoires de M. L. C. D. R., p. 38.

at this time, and dedicated to his master the Cardinal, a work on 'the rights of the King and Crown of France over the kingdoms, duchies, counties, towns, and countries occupied by foreign princes, but pertaining to the very Christian King, by conquest, succession, purchase, or other titles: together with his rights over the Empire.' Richelieu had also employed two men of learning, Dupuy and Godefroy, to enquire into all these rights; and their labours were worked out and laid before him by Dupuy in 1631[1].

The extravagant language of these works finds its echo in Richelieu's Memoirs. 'Long possession gives no right in the matter of kingdoms; for princes are bound by no prescription, nor have they any tribunal before which to appear: wherefore they may always claim their rights against usurpers, and recover them by force[2].' We may see from Cassan's book what these high pretensions were: he claims for the crown of France all Spain, Portugal, and Navarre; he cites twelve titles of the crown to the kingdom of Naples; Milan and Genoa are almost a matter of course: he rises higher, and asserts the right of Louis XIII to Imperial honours 'as the successor of Charlemagne': England is his, for was not the son of Philip Augustus elected by the Estates of England in 1216[3]? The doctrine, convenient and elastic, of natural frontiers is also loudly proclaimed. In 1635 however Richelieu was content with narrower ambitions: he would be quite satisfied if he fortified Metz, and pushed on to Strasburg; he was anxious, as he tells us in 1629, to do it gently, slowly, and surely; to grasp too hastily might be to lose all: he would come among the Germans as their friend and deliverer, using the language often imitated since that time by French conquerors, or would-be conquerors; he would enter in 'to save the liberties of Germany,' whether from the

[1] Not published till 1655. See Laurent, Études sur l'Histoire de l'Humanité, x. p. 260.

[2] Mémoires de Richelieu (Petitot, vii. p. 404).

[3] See Vol. i. pp. 312, 313.

Swede, or from the Catholic empire; and meanwhile he would quietly make sure of the Rhine-frontier, to which his good friend and dependent the Elector of Treves had already introduced him[1].

At the end of 1634, Richelieu had renewed his alliances with Sweden and the Heilbronn Union; the Dutch, early in 1635, consented to join him in an attack on the Spanish Netherlands; his envoys were well seen at Turin, at Parma, at Florence; finally, all things being ready, a pretext for war was easily found: the Spaniards seized and imprisoned the Elector of Treves, whom France protected; hereon the French Court in May 1635 declared war on Spain, and came openly into that field, in which her occult influences had already long been felt.

It was the opening of a new era for France, an era of great and systematised warfare. Hitherto her military operations had been mere expeditions, momentary efforts, sharp and startling, and not of any great permanence of effect: now she comes into the arena as the central power bidding for the predominance in Europe, and eager to assert it on every frontier. Men saw with amazement the vast hosts which heralded these new conditions of warfare. They had thought Richelieu occupied with a thousand cares, with his Academy of letters, his colonial enterprises, his public and private works in Paris, where the grand Palais-Cardinal[2] was now rising, rival to the homes of kings, with his reformation of the Benedictines, and the beginnings of the great literary labours of that order under the guidance of the famous congregation of S. Maur, and with his royal Printing-Press; each by itself a work to occupy an ordinary man: yet all the while he had been quietly preparing and organising a mighty army; and when war at last broke out, one hundred and thirty-two

[1] See above, p. 55.

[2] Afterwards the Palais-Royal; for like Wolsey with Hampton Court, Richelieu was obliged to make a present of his splendid palace to the King. It is gone. The tasteless buildings of the Dukes of Orleans have entirely replaced it.

thousand men were under arms. This unheard-of force, which seemed to have sprung out of the ground, was divided into four armies. One under the Duke of Rohan was to occupy the friendly territory of the Grisons and the Valtelline, while Marshal Créquy, effecting a junction with Victor Amadeus of Savoy, should reduce the Milanese: a second, commanded by the Duke of La Force, should hold the line of the Vosges, defending Lorraine, and observing the Upper Rhine: the third, under the Cardinal La Valette, 'the Cardinal Valet,' as men nicknamed Richelieu's most subservient adherent, was to join Bernard of Saxe-Weimar across the Rhine, and operating with the Swedes, was to endeavour to counteract the effects of the Peace of Prague, which had been signed at the end of May 1635; the fourth, under the Marshals Châtillon and Brézé, was to unite with the Dutch under Frederick Henry Prince of Orange, and, calling on the Netherlands to revolt from their Spanish masters, was ordered to strike at the heart of the enemy's power at Brussels.

Splendid as these armies were, their real strength was far less than it seemed: France knew little or nothing of war; her civil troubles had weakened her fighting-power, without giving her any valuable experience: her chief captains belonged to another order of things, and had no true generalship: discord sprang up between them; the soldiers decamped in crowds, and were quite unfit to face a disciplined enemy, such as came forward to meet them, wearing the scars and experience of a hundred battles. On all hands the enterprises of the French failed. In the Netherlands Piccolomini with a small veteran army cut them off from their communications with northern France, and completely paralysed their action: over the Rhine they reached Frankfort, but were compelled by Gallas to draw back; the Duke of Lorraine raised his country against them in their rear, and they owed their safety solely to the skill and experience in war of Bernard of Weimar. Rohan's campaign was a model of excellence; but Victor Amadeus hung back, and Créquy

could accomplish nothing. Thus the year 1635 saw the downfall of all the extravagant hopes of France; her armies were dissipated or dispirited, her finance in great confusion, her people discontented and restless.

Nor was 1636 more prosperous: the essays of France in arms seemed to prove that she had returned to the state she had been in during the fifteenth century, when even French captains refused to command their countrymen, deeming them unfit for war, and quite unable by nature to stand up against the mercenaries of the day. One asks, what makes one nation at one time, and another at another, master in the battle-field? How came the Swiss, then the Spaniards, then the Swedes or the Scots, at another time the English, at another the French, to win the name of the 'best soldiers in Europe'? At this time, the French soldier makes a poor figure, and is unskilled and ill-led: when he gets practice in war, and finds generals in whom he has confidence, men of strategic genius, he begins at once to win the victories of the 'great age,' and to defy the power of Europe.

The campaigns of 1636 can be quickly summed up. Rohan was left penniless in the Grisons, and unable to do anything; in the following year the inhabitants, angered with promises unfulfilled, rose against him: he had to withdraw and was disgraced, for, though he was as yet the most successful of French generals, he was a great noble and a Huguenot, and Richelieu was never cordial with him. In the Milanese, leaning on that wavering reed the Duke of Savoy, the French accomplished nothing: on the Rhine their successes were but trifling: in Franche-Comté the Prince of Condé failed before the stiff resistance of Dôle[1]. Burgundy was invaded by the Austrians under Gallas; revolts, due to oppressive taxation, broke out in the south of France; the Spaniards crossed the Pyrenees and

[1] Much against his expectation. In a MS. letter (in possession of Mr. Bridges Taylor of Elsinore), addressed by him to the Cardinal of la Valette, and dated 26 July 1636, he says, 'Dieu merci Dôle s'en va pris, nous sommes attachés au bastin qui sert de muraille à la ville et nos mineurs sont desjà dessoubs despuis deus jours: il ny a à craindre qu'un secours.'

threatened Guyenne: finally, Piccolomini, John of Werth, and the Cardinal-Infant, Governor of the Netherlands, finding the way clear, and delighted to punish France for her invasion the year before, marched with a cloud of light horse into Picardy, crossed the Somme, took Corbie, and threatened Paris. In the capital there was an abject panic: many of the great nobles fled to the south, leaving the city to its fate. Richelieu, however, after a moment of despondency, not to be wondered at, took the boldest and safest course, and threw himself on the patriotism of the Parisians; and the King, who was brave enough, came in to Paris from S. Germain. The effect was quite electrical: men took heart and grasped their arms, when the great Cardinal appeared among them, and seemed to wear a fearless countenance. It was strange and significant to see Paris rallying round the Cardinal, and even accepting as its commandant a Huguenot, La Force. It shewed how completely national feeling had overcome the old fanaticism which was wont to have its very stronghold in the trades of Paris. The seven bodies of traders and artisans offered the King their goods and persons for the war with 'so great a gaiety of heart and affection, that many of them embraced and kissed the royal knees[1]': they agreed to serve, and also to pay soldiers. The other cities of the realm contributed speedily and well. The moment the panic was over, the peril was over; for the Spaniards and Netherlanders were chiefly cavalry, unfit to take defenced cities: so that no sooner did the King come out to reconnoitre the passages of the Oise, and to set his troops in motion northwards, than the enemy began to give way. Thirty thousand foot and twelve thousand horse soon swept them out of Picardy, and might have inflicted a sore blow on them, had not Gaston of Orleans and the Count of Soissons been less than half-hearted in the matter. They for their part had no wish to push their Spanish friends too hard for the benefit of Richelieu their old foe. Soissons was pre-

[1] Richelieu, Mémoires (Michaud, ix. p. 70).

sently detected in a correspondence with the Cardinal-Infant: the true difficulty felt in this war lay in the treasonable disaffection of the old Court party on the one hand, and the suspicion, on the other, with which the Government regarded the Huguenot nobles. If they failed, it was thought to be treachery: if they succeeded, it was feared that they would become too powerful to please the Cardinal.

The tide also turned against the enemy in Burgundy: they lingered over the siege of S. Jean de Losne, a feeble town, weakly garrisoned, where they were foiled by the bravery of a handful of soldiers, and of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, till Bernard of Weimar and the Cardinal La Valette came up and drove them headlong across the Rhine.

Operations in 1637 were desultory and isolated, the spirit of the last period of the Thirty Years' War affecting them. The Spaniards invaded Languedoc, and were defeated and driven out by Schomberg: the Iles de S. Marguerite were captured by Sourdis Archbishop of Bordeaux, one of Richelieu's old clerical lieutenants at La Rochelle. Elsewhere nothing decisive, nothing even interesting, took place: the efforts of France seemed fruitless, her waste of hardly-wrung treasure vain. Yet Richelieu persisted, even as he had persisted at La Rochelle, and compelled victory to follow in his train. Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, his best ally, kept up the war along the Rhine-lands in 1638; but as, in spite of all drawbacks and failures, the power of France gradually became more weighty, it was felt that her influence was directed towards selfish ends and was formidable to the other combatants in the great war. The Swedes began to wish for peace: as early as 1637 they tried to negociate separately with the new Emperor Ferdinand III; they accepted the reluctant mediation of Venice, and Cologne was named as the city in which a congress for peace should be held.

France, however, would have no peace till she had settled the question as to the possession of Alsace. The Spaniards and Imperialists were not likely to abandon without a struggle the

province which secured the roadway for the former to the Spanish Netherlands, and for the latter to Northern Germany, to say nothing of the point of honour involved in the loss of territory. Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, having lost his hopes of a Franconian Duchy, desired to secure a principality for himself on either side the Rhine, in the Breisgau and in Alsace; personally and patriotically he had no mind to advance the frontier of France in that direction. The year 1638 was destined to provide the solution of this question; and, in fact, to lay, ten years ere it finally came, the first solid foundations on which the great fabric of the Peace of Westphalia should be built up.

Fortune and fortitude alike contributed to Richelieu's triumph in this 'turning-point of the struggle between France and the House of Austria[1].' At home an event had occurred, which was far more important than the birth of Louis XIII had been, when there were so great rejoicings in Paris: Anne of Austria, after twenty-four years of married life, astonished the world by giving birth to a son, the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XIV. Nothing could have been so opportune[2]: the hopes of the Court-party were dashed to the ground; Gaston of Orleans, now no longer heir to the throne, at once lost almost all his power and consideration; and it was seen that if the King were to die before Richelieu, that great minister would still be able to retain his hold of the government, instead of falling a victim, as they had hoped, to the implacable hatred of his royal and noble enemies.

In this year also the fleet gained the ascendent in the Mediterranean waters: the youthful Viscount of Turenne, after serving for five years under his great soldier-uncles, the two Stattholders Maurice and Henry of Nassau, made his first essay in command with complete success against Duke Charles of

[1] Gardiner's Thirty Years' War, p. 191, an admirable handbook of the war.

[2] It therefore led to rumours and conjectures as to underhand dealings and a supposititious child; men coupled Louis XIV with the Pretender.

Lorraine. Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, early in the year, won the decisive battle of Rheinfelden, in which he entirely dissipated the Imperial army, took its chief generals, including John of Wörth, prisoners, captured all its war-material and standards, and induced a large portion of the soldiery, ever in this war attracted by genius and success rather than by any considerations of nationality or patriotism, to enter his service. Rheinfelden first, and then the key-fortress of Breisach, after a long and brilliant siege, fell into his hands. By the end of 1638 Bernard had destroyed the Hapsburg power in its ancient home. He treated his conquests as his own: the citizens of Breisach paid him personal homage: when Richelieu bade him hand his Alsatian conquests over to France, he replied that he would never dismember the Empire. All Protestant Europe hailed the fall of Breisach with joy[1]: he had cut the great serpent in two; no longer with head at Madrid and tail at Brussels could it strangle all Europe in its folds. Yet Richelieu could only look with anxiety at his success; as the prosperous career of Gustavus Adolphus had filled the French government with fears, so now they dreaded even more the brilliant rise, the genius, the patriotic German feeling, of this one hero of the later period of the war. The Swiss were rejoiced to see the beginnings of a power in Alsace likely to hinder the permanent establishment of the French in Lorraine, which they have ever regarded as a menace to themselves: Charles I of England, now strongly opposed to the French policy, and eager to recover the Palatine Electorate for his brother-in-law's family, warmly supported Bernard and hailed his successes with delight[2].

It was felt everywhere that England, if she could, would be a dangerous opponent to the French plans of aggrandisement. When Richelieu by sharp dealing with unsuccessful or half-

[1] 'La place de Brisach étoit de telle considération qu'elle étoit enviée de tout le monde; la réputation et le bien de vos affaires requéroient qu'elle demeurât en votre disposition.' Richelieu, Succincte narration des grandes actions du Roi (Michaud II. ix. p. 346).

[2] L. von Ranke, History of England, ii. pp. 158, 159.

hearted generals was endeavouring to compel them to do their duty for France, he had to suffer the annoyance of seeing the Queen Mother cross over from Brussels to London, and the Cardinal de la Valette follow her thither; he learnt also that Charles was listening to the Spanish Court, and that round him, in fact, all the influences hostile to France were gathering strength and consolidation.

At this moment of difficulty, Richelieu met with one of the greatest losses which had ever befallen him; for we may set aside as absurd the accounts of his jealousy and dislike of his old servant and friend[1]. At the end of this year Father Joseph died. The dramatic story that with cynical worldliness Richelieu tried to rouse the dying Capucin, not by the consolations of religion, but by triumphant tidings of the fall of Breisach, 'Courage, Father Joseph, Breisach is ours,' is at once disproved by a simple comparison of dates: for Bernard of Saxe-Weimar did not enter the place till Dec. 19, 1638, the very day on which Father Joseph expired. It is hardly needful to add that the fall of Breisach into Bernard's hands was by no means a subject for unmixed satisfaction at Paris.

Father Joseph closed his eyes at the moment when all his ambitions were on the point of being realised. In this last year of his life France had fairly secured the Alsatian frontier; for himself the much-coveted Cardinal's hat was almost within reach; the King's nomination was actually on its way towards Rome when he died. His place at Richelieu's right hand was at once taken by Mazarin: the Cardinal's hat destined for the Capucin fell to the lot of the fortunate Sicilian.

The campaign of 1639, 'mingled roses and thorns,' as Richelieu says[2], would have been absolutely without interest or importance, had it not been for the unexpected death

[1] One ridiculous rumour ran that Richelieu, dreading the rise of Father Joseph, and knowing him to be nominated by Louis XIII to the Cardinalate, had caused him to be poisoned, so as to rid himself of a too powerful friend.

[2] Richelieu, Succincte narration (Michaud, II. ix. p. 344).

of Bernard, which cleared away the one great obstacle to French advancement. His army, the best war-power of the age, was left without a chief: England hoped to win it and use it for her objects, and, with incredible shortsightedness, Charles I arranged that the young Elector-Palatine Charles Louis, to whom personally Bernard's army was very favourable, should pass through France to Breisach, to take command of the 'Weimarian' soldiers.

How could Richelieu fail to seize so favourable and easy an opportunity? The young man was arrested on some trumpery excuse and shut up in Vincennes; and Richelieu, having thus made the field clear, easily won over the wavering army, concluding with it a convention, by which it at once passed into the service of France. It was, in fact, already very dependent on her: French subsidies had enabled Bernard to build it up: was it likely that Richelieu would let this splendid force pass over to a doubtful, if not a hostile, power? The chief officers in the army readily embraced the French side; the lilies flew over the towers of Breisach; French governors took the command in the chief fortresses; a French general, the Duke of Longueville, led the army: Guébriant, as his lieutenant, renewed relations with Banner and the Swedes, and prepared to strike at the heart of the Austrian power.

On all sides France grows in strength. A great Spanish fleet was utterly ruined in the Downs by the Dutch in 1639: it was as if by land and sea alike the connexion between Spain and the Netherlands was to be utterly severed: the French had now learnt the secret of the weakness of Spain, and that they could most easily conquer her by cutting her lines of communication. The great Monarchy of the Peninsula began to fall in pieces: revolts broke out in Catalonia; Portugal asserted her independence (December, 1640); the palsied hand of Philip III, far from being able to menace Holland, seemed likely to drop even the Netherlands. At home Richelieu, after finding his position unexpectedly endangered by the open defection of the Count of Soissons, who in 1641 entered

Northern France near Sedan, at the head of an Imperialist army, was as suddenly relieved from the peril; Soissons perished in battle, and his invasion came to a barren end. In Germany also the arms of France gradually took the ascendent. Guébriant, commanding Frenchmen, Germans, and Swedes, in 1641 defeated the Imperialists at Wolfenbüttel in the north, and at Kempten, in 1642, in the South. In Italy the year 1641 saw the French party dominant for the first time in Savoy. In Spain itself French arms supported the Catalonian revolt, and even penetrated, though with small success, as far as the walls of Tarragona. The Spaniards completely defeated Sourdis, the warlike Archbishop of Bordeaux, who was supporting the attack with a French fleet; and the town being thereupon successfully relieved, the French army abandoned the siege in August, 1642; Sourdis fell into disgrace. This was the only check which befell the Cardinal in these last years of his life.

Yet the resistance to him at home was still alive. The Parliament of Paris, so suspicious and unfriendly at the time of the foundation of the French Academy, grew more so as time went on, and deemed itself the defender of constitutional and legal rights against a ministerial despotism. Its obstinate resistance to the Cardinal irritated and offended him: these officers, the judicial hierarchy of the future, seemed to him exponents of principles ruinous to that absolute government which in his eyes was the only safe form of rule for France. In 1641 the Parliament was forbidden to interfere in public affairs, and ordered to confine itself to the humble function of registering the King's edicts[1]. We shall see, when his heavy hand is removed, that the ideas of constitutional authority resident in the Parliament, ill-digested and futile though they proved themselves, never died out; they revived and bore fruit in the struggles of

[1] The Edict, which was read before the King to the Parliament on its knees, at this time, expresses in the plainest words Richelieu's views as to the absolute power of the monarch. It is quoted by Guizot, Histoire de France, ch. xxxix. tom. iv. p. 72.

the Fronde. Apart from these natural, and in themselves wholesome, aspirations of the lawyers, the great Minister had still to resist his old antagonists, the exiles and the Court. The exiles in the north had been smitten back in 1641; the foes at Court, in spite of Richelieu's most rigorous exclusion of all but persons supposed to be devoted to himself, were still active and mischievous. One of these, Cinq Mars, the Grand Equerry[1], a mere boy, observing that the King chafed under the Cardinal's rule, and weary of the dulness of Court-life, entered on a wide circuit of intrigues with the Queen Mother, with Gaston, with the Duke of Bouillon, and at last with the Spanish Court. He also imparted his plans to young De Thou, his friend, son of the historian 'Thuanus,' who tried to dissuade him from the attempt, and refused to take any part in it.

Richelieu, suspecting mischief—for he had a thousand ears—thought well to take steps to defeat the plot; he confined the war elsewhere to the defensive, while he persuaded the King to take the command of a strong army on the Spanish frontier, threatening to penetrate into Catalonia, and perhaps to dictate peace at Madrid. The King and his Minister, invalids alike, moved to the south by different roads: and Cinq Mars, thinking all things favourable, the Cardinal absent, the Court drawing near to the Spanish borders, where there were greater facilities for communication and a refuge in case of stress, redoubled his efforts, and seemed to carry the King completely with him. Strange is this last struggle over the dying King and the dying Cardinal. Richelieu had scarcely strength to continue his journey: while the King commanded at the siege of Perpignan, the Minister lay at Tarascon, within reach, if things finally went wrong, of Avignon or of Italy.

But Louis XIII, selfish and ungrateful though he might be, knew, as by instinct, that he could not stand a single day in the midst of the bewildering entanglements and risks of European

[1] Hence usually styled in Memoirs 'Monsieur le Grand.'

politics without the support of Richelieu's iron hand: to be free was to be miserable; no caged bird escaping in winter weather would have more lamented his release; and Louis knew also that if Richelieu were gone he would only exchange a nobler for a baser dependence. It must in justice be added that there was this good point in the King's character, that he really desired to advance the honour and dignity of France, little as he himself had done for it: the knowledge of this gives us now, as on the Day of Dupes, the clue to the King's conduct, and made it possible for Richelieu to outwit his enemies and secure his final triumph. When the moment came at which the plot against the great Minister was to take effect, and Louis should have shaken himself free, the King, instead of deposing Richelieu, sent Chavigny, one of the Cardinal's most trusted friends, to Tarascon, where he was lying, with a kind message. The Cardinal answered by placing in Chavigny's hands a copy of the secret treaty between Cinq Mars and Spain. This quite decided the King's action: he ordered Cinq Mars and De Thou to be arrested; the Duke of Bouillon, who was commanding in Piedmont, was seized, even at the head of his army, and shut up in Casale; the Duke of Orleans was a prisoner at Blois. Then the King rejoined his great Minister at Tarascon, and named him 'Lieutenant-General of the realm with full powers.' Having thus placed all power in Richelieu's hands, he returned to Paris, while the Cardinal slowly made his way up the Rhone. It was a strange sight to see the dying Minister, cold and hard as ever, a soul of steel in so fragile a frame, lying in his barge, scarcely strong enough to move, while towed behind in another boat were the two state-prisoners, whom he was dragging to their execution at Lyons. It was a gloomy triumph, 'in the manner, but not with the glory, of the Roman consuls who entered the eternal city with their captives bound behind their chariot; an act more pagan than Christian.' Richelieu was stern and relentless; all France, now on his side, condemned as traitors the conspirators who would have sold their country to the foreigner. Even

Gaston of Orleans himself, scared by the overthrow, this time more complete than ever, of all his unpatriotic schemes, fled from Blois to Bourbon, and thence sent to the Cardinal a full and abject submission, buying once more his own pardon by a mean and cowardly abandonment of his accomplices. He supplied the actual proofs on which Cinq Mars and De Thou were condemned and decapitated at Lyons in the autumn of 1642. Like the great heroes of antiquity, Richelieu had sent worthy victims before him to the shades; he now made ready to follow. He returned to Paris, carried in a great litter[1] with the utmost care: as he went none came forth to bless him: France seemed to regard him with fear, amazement, admiration, as something scarcely human. He had now not long to live: these last three months, however, saw his chief ambitions for the State fulfilled; and as no man ever identified himself more distinctly with his country, we may believe that the late autumn months of 1642 brought the dying Minister the keenest pleasure and reward for all the manifold toils and perils of his life.

At his feet lay the Court-party, discredited in honour, weakened by executions and proscriptions[2], shown in its true colours as an unpatriotic Spanish faction: the King was his servant, ready to do his bidding, and to accept as his future adviser the astute and wary Mazarin, the Cardinal's lieutenant and friend: abroad all had prospered; Perpignan had fallen and Roussillon was in French hands; the Spaniards were unable to make head in Catalonia; Artois was securely held by French armies; things were well in Italy; in Germany the House of Austria had just suffered another crushing defeat at Leipzig; the end of the war could not be far off, and must prove fruitful of

[1] This litter was like a comfortable chamber; it was so large that in some places the gates of towns had to be taken down and the entrances widened, before it could pass through.

[2] It is a long and dreary list (given in Cimber et Danjou, II. v. pp. 109, sqq.). Twenty-one exiles, all of them the greatest names in France; sixty-five banished, several of these being ladies; seventy-three noble prisoners of State; and beheaded or dead in prison forty-three.

gain for France. Seeing all these things Richelieu awaited the hand of death with almost stoical tranquillity; his last hours were calm and dignified; ever kind and faithful to his friends, he received from their loving hands the most tender return, as they smoothed his dying pillow; their hopes and prayers encircled him till the end. We may believe that his sick bed was the first place in which he tasted the pleasures of rest from toil, and of security from the open or secret attacks of foes: there too he was supported by the thought that he had lived for his country rather than for himself: when the priest bade him pardon his enemies, he replied, and men almost shuddered as they heard it, that 'he had never had one, that he had no foes save those of the State.' It was equally true, and a proof, were one wanted, of his greatness, that all the enemies of France instinctively concentrated on him their hatred, making it personal as well as political, because they regarded him as the true soul and life of his country. Those who saw his last hours, and remembered the merciless severity which had crushed the nobles of France, trembled at his serenity, as he fearlessly went forth to meet the judgment of God. The judgment of posterity he had already appealed to by careful preparation of his Memoirs, in which he draws a grand picture of himself, and a subtle delineation of the motives and principles of his political career. It is of this remarkable work that Michelet says with some truth: 'If one would not know Richelieu, one should read his Memoirs[1].'

The great Cardinal was fifty-eight years old when he died. No man, perhaps, who has ever lived has had so much influence over the destinies of France: to him is mainly due the splendid tyranny of Louis XIV; he it was who laid the foundations for the despotism of Napoleon. Judged by such results as these, he stands among great men, in spite of his want of many elements of real greatness: there was not enough of flesh and blood in him for a true hero.

[1] Michelet, Henri IV et Richelieu, p. 363.

After the affected fashion of the time, Charles I of England, though one of Richelieu's decided political opponents, did not hesitate to say of him that 'even as Scipio, after hearing the charges against himself, said, On this day I took Numantia, on that I conquered Hannibal, on the other I destroyed Carthage; let us go thank the gods in the Capitol; so Richelieu could say,—On such a day I took Rochelle; on that other, I reduced thirty-five Huguenot towns to allegiance, twice I succoured Casale, Savoy and part of Piedmont have I given to my King,—let these make reply for me.' Who can deny that his deeds were great, striking, and pregnant with large results? Yet as to their intrinsic and permanent value, there has ever been a great difference in opinion. No sooner was he dead, than a whole literature of pamphlets, satires, and squibs broke forth against him: these, however, were chiefly the work of political foes, expressing with more freedom and equal rancour the views of the exiles of Brussels. The French literature of hatred has a terrible fecundity: Satire, the avenger of despotism, has perhaps more cause to exist in France than elsewhere, and certainly in no other country has the weapon been wielded by keener or more dexterous pens. No language spoken is so neat, precise, and clear of expression as the French tongue, none so well-fitted to convey the delicate touches and ever-varying surface-reflexions which characterise good satire-drawing. Henry IV, Father Joseph, Richelieu, Mazarin, were all in turn assailed by that virulent party-writing, which in France has unhappily too often taken the place of wholesome party-life, and has been but a poor substitute for a fair constitutional resistance to despotism. While in England opposition to the Court ended in the Great Rebellion, the wars of the League in France, the revolts under Louis XIII, the miserable Fronde after his death, were all enveloped in a cloud of satires and scurrilities, and did but make political servitude inevitable.

In the eighteenth century, Frenchmen mostly deemed

Richelieu a 'clever intriguing rascal[1];' Montesquieu groups him with Louvois, as 'one of the two worst citizens France has produced[2].' In Germany it was much the same; Schlegel says that 'Ferdinand, and Gustavus Adolphus fought for their faith; Wallenstein had at least a superstition, his astrology: but Richelieu had neither faith nor law, and was a political Atheist[3].' Anquetil, a little later, as he records the one cold and indifferent remark which Louis XIII made when he heard of the great Minister's death, 'So dies a great politician,' adds that 'this short funeral oration tells us all that can be said of him.' Corneille, whom the Cardinal had deeply offended by his hostility to the Cid, avenged himself by writing an epitaph on Louis XIII, which was a bitter satire on Richelieu's memory. 'Pride,' he writes, 'ambition, self-interest, avarice, clothed with his name, dictated laws to France.' Another epitaph, attributed to the great Grotius, says that 'he kept his allies in their places, and made Frenchmen his slaves; his friends were at his feet, his foes in the dungeon: it was his one curse, to be the curse of all men; he was at once the ornament, and the torment of his time[4].' Even Turenne thought Mazarin the greater man; but no one has ever supported that paradox[5].

On the other side, Bolingbroke clearly saw and pointed out the right way of regarding the Cardinal's position[6]; he treats him as having 'formed the great design, and laid the foundations' on which Mazarin afterwards built, and on the topmost pinnacle of which stood Louis XIV. In other words, Richelieu must be judged by the vast results of his work:

[1] See Le Vassor's Louis XIII, iv. p. 574.

[2] Montesquieu, Pensées Diverses, Œuvres, vi. p. 308, ed. 1827.

[3] Schlegel, Lectures on History, xvii.

[4] 'Socios in praecinctu, cives in servitute,
Amicos in obsequio, inimicos in carcere;
Hoc tamen uno miser, quod omnes miseros fecit,
Tam saeculi sui tormentum quam ornamentum.'

The whole epitaph is quoted in Robson's Richelieu, pp. 472, 473.

[5] There is a brilliant contrast drawn between Richelieu and Mazarin in Voltaire's Henriade.

[6] Bolingbroke, Letters on the Study of History, vii.

we must allow that he was a patriot, so far as an ardent desire for the honour and glory of his country entitles a man to that name; beyond that, he was cold, severe, and implacable; he showed no feeling for the happiness of the French people, who have repaid his neglect by excluding him mercilessly from their roll of popular heroes: his influence over Europe was far greater than that of Henry IV; yet what Frenchman would for a moment rank them together? when Richelieu died, all France seemed to breathe again; bonfires were lit on many a hill, as if for some great deliverance or victory.

It would not be just to say that the Cardinal saved Europe from the universal monarchy of Spain; for Spain was already falling to pieces when he began to attack her; but it is true that he so handled the political movements of his day, as to bring Europe within reach of a more terrible universal monarchy, that of France herself under Louis XIV, which, but for the resistance of Holland, might have overwhelmed the world. The Dutch enjoy the high honour of having twice saved the Western world from subjection;—first, when they fought out against Spain their heroic struggle for independence, and then when they produced that great politician and soldier, William III, who dared to resist and arrest the far-reaching ambitions of France.

The results of Richelieu's life, then, whereon he stands for the judgment of posterity, are chiefly these:—abroad, though a Cardinal of the Church, he arrested the Catholic reaction, freed Northern from Southern Europe, and made toleration possible: at home, out of the broken fragments of her liberties and her national prosperity, he paved the way for the glory of France. Those who worship strength and success will admire a man who, moving on his high course with resolute step, seems unconscious of human infirmities, of pity or humanity. Yet if we count the love of our fellow-men the first quality of a great character, or think that land happiest in which the liberties of the subject are steadily and surely built up from

age to age, then we shall condemn the strong man armed, who gave no thought to his oppressed and labouring countrymen, and made constitutional life impossible for France. It may well be that this did not present itself to Richelieu's mind: he probably never told himself that his policy was based on the ruin of French liberties; the troubles of the sixteenth century, and the peculiar aptitudes of the French people, may even have led him to believe it impossible to do otherwise than as he did. Yet, as we watch his career, we see one after another the elements of constitutional life perishing: the Law Courts or Parliaments, at Paris and elsewhere, resist in vain, and are reduced to impotence; the Church becomes subservient; the Huguenot cities, which might have formed the nucleus of a healthy public opinion, are crushed into silence; the independence of the noble goes; the States General are not convoked, and the local estates lose their liberties[1]: imposts are levied at the King's pleasure, the people overwhelmed with taxes and rewarded with neglect. Richelieu's Memoirs tell us that in 1634 taxation was much reduced, a quarter of the 'Taille' remitted, noble privilege curtailed, sometimes abolished, the clergy compelled to pay their share[2]. But this was only a momentary relief; the burdens in fact grew frightfully. Under Henry IV the country paid from twenty to thirty millions of livres in the year, and deemed itself very heavily burdened: at the end of Richelieu's rule, the taxation had risen to more than one hundred and twenty millions; the old evils of a bad system reappeared; Sully's reforms vanished, the Treasury often did not receive one half the amount levied. The administration, so brilliant abroad, is baneful at home: 'obedience is based on fear, hatred shall be cast out by terrorism' says Ambassador Grotius, speaking of this time[3]. It may be

[1] With exception of those of the Duchy of Burgundy, which retained some power, in spite of the *Lanterlu* revolt.

[2] Richelieu, Mémoires (Michaud, II. viii. p. 514).

[3] In his valuable Letters from the French Court, where he was Swedish envoy.

that Richelieu did but carry out tendencies long rooted in French soil[1], did but push one step farther that absolute and irresponsible monarchy, which had already been seen and approved by France, under Francis I and Henry IV. It may be so; yet to have systematised absolutism, to have formulated the terrible dogma that taxation is under control of the King alone, to have trampled out the last fires of French liberty, to have riveted the chains of that despotism, which for a hundred and fifty years had France at its feet, can never be called the work of a true patriot or of a great statesman.

And if it be urged that no other course lay before him, and that we must judge him by the times, there still remains the fatal fact, that in his earlier days Richelieu had been singularly fertile in great schemes for the welfare of France[2]; and that the overthrow of his country's liberties, and his cynical neglect of her prosperity, were to a large extent sins against light. He may have thought, after subjecting his country to the monarchy, and assuring its position in the European arena, that he might go on to play the part of the beneficent despot; had he lived ten more years, France might have blessed instead of hating him; though, even then, the country which owes its well-being to a ruler's will, in which 'all is for the people, and nothing by the people,' cannot be treading the path of a wholesome national growth or prosperity. Richelieu, however, does not seem even to have wished so much as this: he was willing that commerce should grow, he did nothing to vex the trading communities; but he held the true despot's doctrine, that heavy taxes and a squalid people were safer to build on, less likely to cause revolt and trouble, than a thrifty government and contented peasantry. He remembered the rich and turbulent cities of past time, and their manful and disrespectful resistance to their lords.

[1] So says Martin, defending him. Histoire de France, xi. p. 579.
[2] See above, p. 21, for his theory of a perfect France.

We look in vain throughout his career for any sign of a true statesman's love and care for his people.

And indeed Richelieu was a politician rather than a statesman: his mind, singularly acute and intelligent, was neither deep nor broad: ambition for his country, a desire to raise her among the nations, a consciousness that unity would bring her strength, these were the ideas which ennobled his career. This gives harmony to his life: his marvellous tenacity of purpose, his patience, fearlessness, sleepless vigilance, unscrupulousness in use of any means to win his ends, all these qualities were bent on one object—the abasement of Austria, the exaltation of France: for this he lived, defending with one hand his hard-won and precarious footing at home, while with the other hand he guided negociations or led armies abroad against the great foes who in 1628 had seemed to be almost absolute masters of Europe.

This double struggle gives him an air of mystery at home and of grandeur abroad. He loved to hide himself behind some cloud: he had a thousand spies at his call; whole monastic orders became his secret police; while he reformed them, he made them his tools. The amusing 'Memoirs of Count Rochefort' tell us that the Cardinal often did things mysteriously, which he might just as well have done openly[1]: all life was a game of cards, which depended on hiding one's hand. He may not have been a false man, but no one would expect us to call him a true one. Truth or falsehood, opinions or beliefs, were all alike subordinate in him to political interests. For instance, the Cardinal was coldly religious, and a man of apparently excellent life, neglecting none of the duties of his clerical station, strict in observances; yet he never for a moment hesitated about allying himself with the anti-Catholic party, or doubted about rescuing Protestantism from peril of destruction.

Richelieu was no high-soaring spirit, which forgets itself in the

[1] See also Michelet, Henri IV et Richelieu, p. 363. He gives as a motto for the Cardinal that of the Sphinx reversed, 'Quiconque me devine en mourra.'

grandeur of its objects: the very difficulties of his position and the vigilance it required, made him think much of himself; there was also in him a vein of personal vanity, which showed itself in the startling impressions he loved to make on others; many surprises in his life there were, and of a theatrical kind; he wished not merely to write dramas but to act them. He had little or none of the suppleness of the mere diplomatist; his temper was too haughty and too hot for that; he could be very winning and kind, but always as a great Prince might be; in which he contrasts greatly with his successor Mazarin, who glides in and out without pride. Richelieu was in fact proud as well as vain; he could not brook contradiction, and was easily moved to anger, having in him a sharp spark of latent fire, which often kindled his grey eyes till men could not bear to look on them.

He was apparently quite free from grosser vices, though his foul-mouthed enemies set afloat many a story; the mystery he loved gave idle folk plenty of excuses for fabricating tales: thus, he was much blamed and ill-spoken of for his frequent visits to the house of his niece; yet the 'Memoirs of Count Rochefort' affirm that the Cardinal went thither only that he might the more safely and secretly meet all kinds of emissaries and agents, whom he dared not have about his own house [1].

Richelieu has been likened to Cardinal Wolsey; still, apart from a common love of splendour, and a tendency to regard the world from the political rather than the religious point of view, apart also from the curious parallel and coincidence between the fortunes of Hampton Court and those of the Palais Cardinal, the two men will be found to have really had very little in common. In magnificence the Frenchman even surpasses the Englishman: Richelieu's last will is an amazing monument of his wealth, his splendid possessions, literary tastes, and patriotic ideas: as the terrible epitaph quoted above [2] has it, 'he willed away the kingdom to his family, and decreed that the people should perish of want.' Under him France grew yearly more

[1] Rochefort, Mémoires, p. 39. [2] Ibid. p. 76.

starved and feverish: many provinces suffered horribly; Poitou, so fertile and wealthy, became as wild and waste as Brittany.

He desired to be supreme patron of literature and the arts: he founded the Academy, established the Gazette of France, wished to favour learned men. Yet we must not forget that he persecuted Corneille, and hounded on his new Academy to run down the Cid; it is a damaging fact that Descartes fled from him, unable to breathe the atmosphere of Paris, and worked out his philosophy at Amsterdam; nor could he tempt the all-learned Salmasius back from Holland, that refuge of letters and thought. His own literary attempts were failures, and lie buried in oblivion. The centre of court-literature was the Hotel de Rambouillet, which preceded and formed the nucleus of the Academy, where the meetings were thronged with fine ladies and obsequious authors. Its mouth-piece had been Malherbe, 'who organised the French language on the plan which Henry IV had followed for the State[1],' and who perhaps also foreshadowed the method of Louis XIV; for while he ejected all foreign words and idioms, as Henry IV had cast out the Spaniards from Paris, he also drew a strict distinction between 'noble' and 'vulgar' words, and created a polite and subservient language, which threw the good old French speech into neglect; even as Louis XIV grouped a brilliant and powerless noblesse about the throne, while his people begged for bread. So Malherbe, a flat and commonplace intelligence, destroyed all provincialisms, all rough vigour; he would have died of an original phrase[2]. What a gulf between him and Rabelais! Affected, euphuistic, full of finesse and proprieties, the writers of the day cringed before the noblemen of taste who set the tone; what in England had been a mere mistletoe-growth on the vigorous tree of literature became in France for a time the only growth. Happy for France that Corneille was too true and

[1] Geruzet, Hist. de la littérature française, ii. p. 3 (ed. 1876).

[2] Boileau, believing it to be an enconium, writes of Malherbe thus:

'Enfin Malherbe vint, ...
Et réduisit la Muse aux règles du devoir.'

strong a man long to remain one of that poor quintett of dramatic writers, who were employed in building up for Richelieu a fictitious literary reputation.

The Cardinal's natural taste for splendour also no doubt called artists around him: yet their works are mostly of second-rate quality, their names obscure; whether they were painters, sculptors or architects, they belonged to an age of artistic decadence. For the time is one of the letter rather than of the spirit: arts and literature are formal, often pedantic, usually dull; genius bows to rule: the absolutist tendency shows itself in these realms as clearly as in the sphere of politics.

If we would sum up in a word Richelieu's claim to greatness, we may do so by saying that this frail personage, this invalid, this 'ghost of a great man,' as Michelet styles him, is the true founder of the French absolute Monarchy. His age is the age of the struggle of European monarchs against the growing life of their nations; a time of feeble sovereigns claiming exaggerated prerogatives and absolute power. In England James I and Charles I learnt what comes of collision with a strong and self-willed people; to Richelieu, who never could have understood the resistance of a people fighting for its liberties, the Great Rebellion was but one portion of the game, by which an unfriendly English monarch was hindered from interfering on the Continent: in Spain Philip III was doing his utmost, and with eminent success, to ruin his country: Ferdinand III of Austria was 'a new Philip II,' as fanatical, as bitterly opposed to German liberties and to toleration as the Spaniard had been: in France Louis XIII was a feeble prince, and then for some years Louis XIV was but a child; yet round them grew the strong fabric of absolutist government. It is singular that while the Monarch disappears from sight, and his Court is an actual obstacle, the great Minister, alone and unaided, successfully establishes the despotic and irresponsible monarchy on so firm a basis, that it stands the shock of war, the strain of its master's ambition, the wearing tooth of time, and only falls at last after it has tasked for ages the patient endurance of the world.

CHAPTER VI.

FRANCE UNDER MAZARIN, TO THE END OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR. A.D. 1643–1648.

WHEN Richelieu died Louis XIII seemed to be neither sorry nor glad. Doubtless the burden had been heavy on him; yet from what toil and responsibilities the great Minister had saved him! This King, otherwise so obscure, has, as we have said, one claim to the respect of his country: he sincerely desired that France should have an independent career, and throughout his life resented the unpatriotic position taken up by the Spanish party at Court, and was full of distrust towards his spouse, Anne of Austria: he was quite aware of the true import of Richelieu's policy in German affairs. Therefore, though his death may have been a relief, still Louis at once declared it his intention to 'follow out all the late Cardinal's plans, whether at home or abroad;' and Mazarin, heir of Richelieu's inmost thoughts and views, became forthwith the guiding spirit in the counsels of France.

Mazarin had little of his master's cold severity: the tension slackened at once; and reconciliations took place, the Minister seeming ready to be friends with all; charming and supple, he glides lightly between parties, smoothes down all jealousies, secures firm hold on the confidence and affection of Anne of Austria, and appears likely to begin once more the old Italian balancing-policy, which under Catherine dei Medici had been so fatal to France.

Gaston of Orleans, indolent and ambitious as ever, and a scandal to his country, returned to Court, was pardoned and

restored to favour: the nobles lying in the Bastille were released, the exiles recalled. Before they had time to group themselves, or form fresh factions, and before they had become familiar with the face of France without Richelieu, death overtook the melancholy monarch, and he ended his obscure life in May 1643.

Louis XIII left two sons, Louis the Dauphin, now four years and a half old, and Philip, Duke of Anjou, afterwards Duke of Orleans, founder of the younger branch of the Bourbons. The late King willed that the Regency should be entrusted to Anne of Austria, in spite of his dislike and distrust of her: we probably see in this the first mark of Mazarin's hand. Though Gaston was named Lieutenant-General of the realm, the government was in the hands of a Council, composed of the Prince of Condé, Mazarin, Seguier the Chancellor, Bouthillier and Chavigny. But as no one obeyed the late King while he lived, so now even his last will was not attended to. Anne, a woman of energy and ambition, proud and haughty, and of no small political capacity, having at her back the shrewd advice of Mazarin and the support of those who had been oppressed under the late reign, the nobles and the Parliament of Paris, soon freed herself from the Council of Regency, and ruled alone. Gaston made no opposition; the Parliament of Paris, pleased with a part which seemed not only to restore its old importance but to promise a great career for the future, willingly set aside the late King's testament, and declared Anne of Austria sole Regent of the realm.

It looked as if a great reaction would follow. The Queen Mother, centre of the former opposition to Richelieu's policy, was now supreme: the old Court-party and great nobles, who had ever looked up to her, expected to take the command; if Mazarin, who alone held the threads of foreign policy, were to be permitted to remain in office till peace was made, his power would have to be jealously watched and controlled; after peace had come, he should be quietly removed. Potier, Bishop of Beauvais, whom Cardinal de Retz calls 'the idiot of idiots,' was put forward as leader; pardons and amnesties were showered

on all, deposed officers restored; nothing could exceed the airs of superiority and exultation with which these poor grandees, so long held down and kept out of offices and rewards, came back to Court, eager to enjoy all, to secure all, to rule all. The French people, ever good at a nickname, at once affixed to them the telling title of 'the Importants.' The merciless severity of Richelieu had taken from them all their true strength: they were destined to make a brief and ridiculous struggle: and then, like pallid ghosts of a power long dead, they flitted into the shades, when the young Monarch, like a rising sun, began to shoot his dazzling rays across the world[1].

Moreover, the course of the war, still raging on the borders of France, was fatal to the nobles. When Richelieu died, the Austro-Spanish power plucked up courage and took the offensive. On the Rhine, in the Netherlands, they pushed on, determined to penetrate into Champagne, to threaten Paris. The Governor of the Netherlands, Francis of Mello, besieged Rocroy, a town not far from the frontiers of Flanders and Liège, formerly fortified by Francis I and by Henry II. Had he won it, he might have joined hands with the Imperialists, who were pressing hard on Guébriant and the old 'Weimarian' army on the Rhine, and Champagne would have been defenceless.

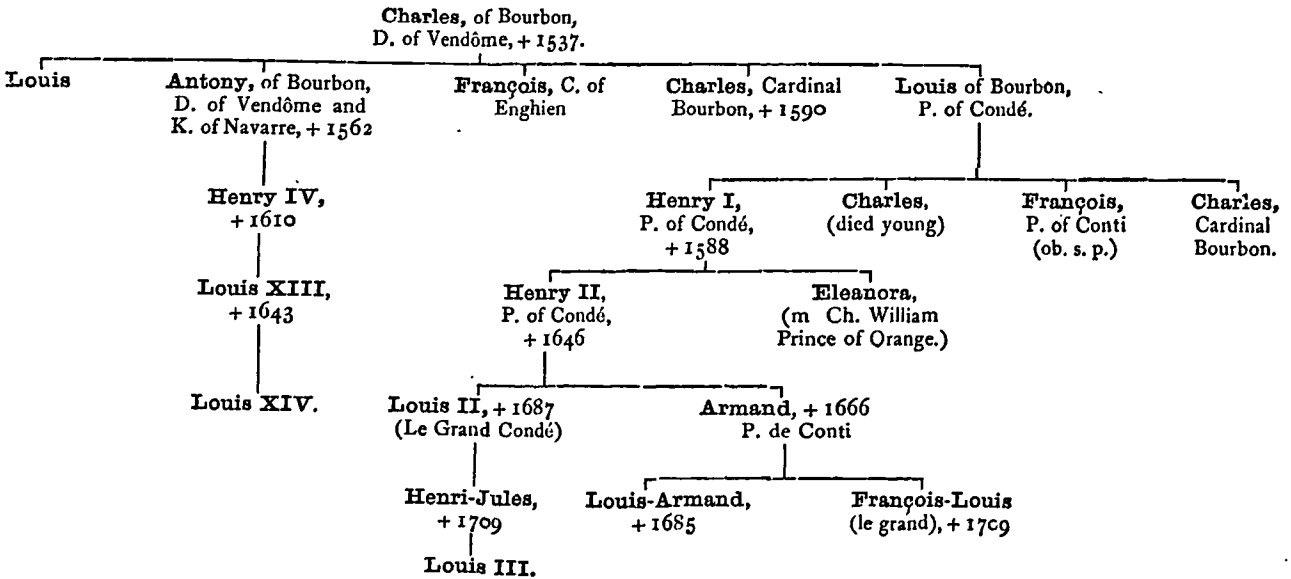
The army hastily sent up to relieve Rocroy was commanded by the youthful Duke of Enghien, afterwards 'the Great Condé[2].' He was but twenty-two, and had with him as monitor in war the aged and timid Marshal L'Hôpital. But Enghien had the daring of a boy and the eye of a conqueror: he was one of those whom inexperience helps to great victories. Fearlessly he advanced his men through a dangerous

[1] Louis XIV delighted to pose himself as Apollo, sun-god; the sun was his special cognisance. See De la Hode, Histoire de la vie et du règne de Louis XIV, enrichée de Medailles, ii. p. 252, iii. p. 10, 11; and the famous 'Nec Pluribus Impar,' ib. p. 87, with many others. The well-known medal of William III, with Joshua bidding the sun stand still, is figured in Chevallier's Histoire de Guillaume III, p. 112.

[2] Eldest son of the then Prince of Condé. See Pedigree on opposite page.

TABLE I.—THE HOUSE OF CONDÉ.

(See, for the earlier Pedigree, the Table of Henry IVth's Descent, Vol. II. p. 396.)


Charles, of Bourbon, D. of Vendôme, + 1537.
Louis
Antony, of Bourbon, D. of Vendôme and K. of Navarre, + 1562
François, C. of Enghien
Charles, Cardinal Bourbon, + 1590
Louis of Bourbon, P. of Condé.
Henry IV, + 1610
Louis XIII, + 1643
Louis XIV.
Henry I, P. of Condé, + 1588
Charles, (died young)
François, P. of Conti (ob. s. p.)
Charles, Cardinal Bourbon.
Henry II, P. of Condé, + 1646
Eleanora, (m Ch. William Prince of Orange.)
Louis II, + 1687 (Le Grand Condé)
Armand, + 1666 P. de Conti
Henri-Jules, + 1709
Louis III.
Louis-Armand, + 1685
François-Louis (le grand), + 1709

defile, where they might easily have been overwhelmed; fearlessly he deployed under the eyes of the Spanish army, who there stood in their slow solid way, waiting to be attacked. L'Hôpital held the right wing of the enemy in check while Enghien routed their left, and then, with his light-moving cavalry, got round to their right wing, and, relieving L'Hôpital, who was hard pressed, routed that also. Still there remained a solid centre, or reserve of Spanish infantry, the invincible soldiers who for so long had triumphed on every battle-field. Against these the impetuous Enghien hurled himself, and a battle of heroes raged. Thrice the strong infantry of Spain dashed back the waves of fierce attack: at the fourth rush of the gallant French they broke and gave: the great rock which had braved so many storms tottered and fell; the waves of the victorious attack came boiling and surging over the ruin. Then fell for ever the invincible Spanish infantry, the terror of the world. More than a hundred years before, French courage had destroyed the belief in the unconquerable Swiss: now Enghien had done the same thing with the Spaniards. Rocroy restored the threatened preponderance of the French in the war, while it consolidated the regency of Anne of Austria at Paris (18 May, 1643).

Enghien, after Rocroy, took Thionville; and, as a broad hint to observant Europe, Mazarin caused a medal to be struck, presenting in the ancient manner Hope with a figure of Victory in her right hand, and around it the threatening legend, 'Prima Finium Propagatio,' the child-King's first conquest. Then Enghien was able to send much-needed help to Guébriant, now in great straits in Alsace. The House of Condé was friendly to Mazarin, and Rocroy secured his triumph over the 'Importants.' At Paris it was as if Richelieu had come to life again[1]; the Importants had threatened the Court with the old

[1] 'Demandez-le à tous les Importants,
Ils vous diront d'un moult piteux langage—
Il n'est pas mort.'
From a song of this time, quoted by Guizot, Histoire de France, iv. p. 197.

revolts and troubles; but Mazarin and the Queen-Regent struck one blow in the old style, and the whole party was broken up at once; the Duke of Beaufort was imprisoned at Vincennes; Vendôme, Mercœur, Guise, and the Duchess of Chevreuse were exiled. Mazarin became First Minister, and remained all-powerful for four years, prosperous at home, and successful in bringing the great war to a triumphant close at Münster. Mazarin not merely enjoyed the confidence of Anne of Austria, he won her love; there is no reason to doubt that they were actually married[1].

In this year, 1643, Guébriant was killed, and Rantzau, his successor, taken prisoner; the attempts of the French beyond the Rhine all failed. Turenne, now made a Marshal of France, was next named to the command: and, with Enghien at his side, he restored the balance of the war. For Marshal Turenne[2] was the first soldier of his age in point of skill and science of war: he was the greatest tactician of Europe, while the young Duke of Enghien[3] was reckless of his soldiers' blood, and had that impetuous valour and that genius of battle, which often snatch victory where wiser and more cautious spirits would have failed, or would have refused to fight. In the end the steadier qualities of Turenne prevailed: when the two came into collision in the war of the Fronde, Condé was decisively over-mastered; and the successes of this great master of the

[1] See the subject treated in Mignet, Negociations relatives à la succession d'Espagne, I. xlvi. note 1. Mazarin, though a Cardinal, could lawfully marry, as he was only in Deacon's orders. Giulio Mazarini was a Sicilian, born in 1602. He, like his master, was first a soldier (in the Spanish service). He did not come into France till 1635. La Vallée, iii. p. 169, note 2.

[2] Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Viscount of Turenne, younger son of the Duke of Bouillon, one of the best and most valued generals of Henry IV, and of one of the daughters of William of Orange, was born at Sedan in 1611, and brought up, like his father, as a Calvinist. He served five years under his famous uncles Maurice and Henry of Nassau, then was called to fight for his country in Lorraine and Italy, and in 1645 superseded Rantzau on the Rhine. He yielded to his patriotic sentiments, and to the arguments of Bossuet, and in 1668 abjured the Huguenot faith.

[3] The Great Condé, Louis (see Table I, p. 67), was known as Duke of Enghien till 1646, in which year his father died. He was born in 1621 at Paris.

art of war hastened the conclusion of the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659, even as he largely contributed to that of the Peace of Westphalia earlier in 1648.

The struggle was, as before, for the Rhine communications; Breisach and Freiburg in the Breisgau were in French hands at the end of 1643, but the ill-success of Rantzau had endangered all; the French army was obliged to recross the Rhine, and Mercy besieged and took Freiburg: Alsace was threatened.

In the summer of 1644 Turenne and Enghien, after three days' murderous fighting, drove Mercy out of an almost impregnable position in front of Freiburg; it was the most terrible slaughter of all the war, nor was the advantage in the fighting all on one side. But Mercy's supplies were menaced: and the Imperialists fell back, with loss of baggage and artillery, escaping through the Black Forest into the Danube Valley, while the French generals occupied the whole Rhineland: all the lower Palatinate was theirs; Freiburg alone held for the Imperialists.

At the same time the Swedes under Torstensen overran all Northern Germany, and with amazing speed had coerced Denmark as well as Bohemia; early in 1645 Torstensen defeated the Austrians at Jankow, and threatened Vienna: he sent to the French and their German allies, urging them to push down the Danube Valley, while Ragotski, Prince of Transylvania, would approach from the side of Hungary, and he himself from the Moravian passes. Thus from West, East, and North at once, the heart of the Austrian power should be menaced.

Turenne obeyed the call and penetrated into Swabia, carrying all before him: but he moved northwards not eastwards, and reached the Main not the Danube: Mercy caught him there and defeated his discontented troops, mostly German mercenaries, at Mergentheim (May 1645). Turenne, however, retreated safely into Hesse, and being there joined by Enghien, the combined forces returned into Swabia, and fought a second battle of Nördlingen; it was another example of Enghien's daring and reckless warfare. Mercy was killed early in the day, and to that mishap, together with the discipline and valour

of the veterans of the 'Weimarian' army, the victory of the French that day was entirely due. One can feel nothing but anger at victories won by sheer bloodshed and reckless dash, when one knows that the wiser strategy of Turenne, here and at Freiburg, might have secured all without the terrible losses of such hard-fought fields. Splendid as was the battle of Nördlingen, no fruit was to be reaped from it. The French had suffered so much that the Imperialists actually recovered the ascendent. Torstensen had to retreat out of Austria: the French were driven back to the Rhine.

The attempt to crush the Imperial power at its heart had thus failed: and another method of overcoming it must be tried. The French judged it well to attack Bavaria, hoping thereby to compel the Elector Maximilian to separate his interests,—which in truth were very distinct,—from those of the House of Austria. The Catholic League now falls to pieces: the great coalition of Spain, Austria, and Bavaria draws to an end. Maximilian cared nothing as to the fate of Alsace, and was more willing that it should be in the hands of Catholic France than in those of the Protestant Princes. They were much more his foes than Mazarin could be: from France, with which he had been in communication in the earlier years of the war[1], he might get the Upper Palatinate; he might also obtain some guarantee for the permanence of his Electorate[2]. The French, seeing this, felt certain that by a vigorous effort they might wrench him away from the side of the Emperor. The interest, therefore, of the campaign of 1646 lies in Bavaria: and fortunately for France, the Duke of Enghien was no longer in command there, having been sent to reduce the Belgian provinces. Turenne would certainly not fight such dangerous and almost fatal battles as Rocroy, Freiburg, and Nördlingen. By a brilliant and

[1] See above, p. 11.

[2] It must be remembered that the Electorate of Bavaria was quite new, having been created in arbitrary fashion by the Emperor Ferdinand II in 1623; and it was clear that whenever the Peace of Europe was restored, the question of the permanence of this Electorate would have to be considered and settled.

successful stroke of strategy, after joining the Swedes under Wrangel, he out-manœuvred the Germans, and marched straight into Bavaria, which had hitherto felt little of the evils of the war. The whole valley of the Danube was radiant with the blessings of peace; the French and Swedes, eager to teach the Elector his lesson thoroughly, ravaged the whole country, and added it to the ghastly list of districts ruined by this terrible war. All Bavaria fell into their hands: they even threatened Maximilian in Munich. The Elector at last signed, in May 1647, a separate truce with his invaders, and detached himself from the Imperialists. Though the chief efforts of France in this campaign had been made in Flanders and elsewhere, the genius of Turenne, with a small army of unpromising troops, mostly adventurers, had really made the first step towards the victorious close of the war. The defection of the Elector of Bavaria, the separate truces made also by the Electors of Cologne and Mainz, showed the Emperor that resistance was becoming impossible. Though the Elector of Bavaria broke his truce with France as soon as he could, it brought no good fortune to the Imperialist side: Bavaria was again ravaged, and its resistance crushed at Zusmarshausen on May 17, 1648, the last battle of the war in Germany.

The war, from the French side, was now chiefly directed against Spain, not against Germany: in Italy, in Flanders, and in Catalonia, it was clear that the only struggle now remaining lay between the two Latin Crowns. One more battle illustrates the brilliant career of the great Condé, and contributes to the settlement of the Peace. He was pitted against the Archduke Leopold, who with eighteen thousand Spaniards had taken Courtrai and was besieging Lens. There, on the 9th of August, 1648, Condé came to a death-struggle with him, and after another great battle utterly destroyed his army, capturing all its artillery, standards, and munitions. The Spaniards lost nearly half their number: unlike Condé's previous battles, it cost the French but little. So completely was the balance of strength turned in favour of France and

Sweden, that farther delay was felt to mean nothing but farther loss; what if Condé entered Brussels, and Turenne Vienna, as seemed only too likely? the negociations of Münster and Osnabrück came to an end at last.

For years there had been talk and trafficking about peace: though no party till now had been strong enough to bring things to a point: each power wished to throw one more cast of the dice: each captain shrank at the thought of losing his life's business of war and rapine: the pride of some, the high claims of others, the equal exhaustion of all, made peace a thing impossible. As long back as 1632, Wallenstein had tried to dictate terms of peace; he had failed: the Peace of Prague in 1635 between the Emperor and the Elector of Saxony had but tended to lengthen out the war and to throw the decision into the hands of the foreigner.

There had been an attempt at negociations for peace in 1639 at Cologne, and ambassadors named. Nothing came of it, things not being ready for serious treatment. The first real stage in the business was got over at Hamburg, where, on Christmas Day 1641, after long and weary dealings, a 'preliminary-tractate' was signed between the Emperor and the Swedes and Danes, France acceding to it at once. By this document all prior questions were dealt with, if not settled. The two seats of the Congress, Osnabrück and Münster, were named: it was settled that these towns should be neutralised; and that the two congresses should be regarded as one: the roads between them were declared open, so that safe and free communication might be kept up. Next, at Osnabrück the Emperor should negociate with Sweden and the Protestant Princes; at Münster with France, Spain, and the Catholic Princes. Thus Catholic and Protestant interests were to be kept apart: but, above all, the French and Swedish 'satisfactions' would have to be treated independently.

With the lengthy course of the negociations we have fortunately little to do: not till July 1643 did the Imperial Envoy receive his instructions to deal with France. Much

time was spent in fencing over preliminary matters, questions of etiquette, precedence, titles; France for a long time was in no hurry to proceed; first she waited for the fall of Thionville; then to see what would happen on the Rhine, and so on.

In August 1643 Salvius the Swedish Envoy wrote a most friendly letter to Mazarin: France and Sweden, said he, must hold together; they must watch with the utmost vigilance the Emperor's attempts on Germany: Swedish and French interests coincided in resistance, while their respective 'satisfactions' lay far apart, and could not clash; it was obvious that they must hold together. Yet, though the Emperor and the Swedes pressed on the congress, France still held back. War, for the time, suited Mazarin better than peace: war employed the formidable young Prince of the Blood, Enghien, while it also made the eventual profit of France more and more secure. Still, for appearance's sake, some French and Spanish envoys, by the end of 1643, had arrived at Münster, and the Swedes at Osnabrück; the chief French minister D'Avaux, however, did not appear till March 1644. Much time went in ceremonial disputes: the unlucky Imperial ambassadors were at their wits' ends to invent expedients by which questions of dignity and etiquette might be settled: wrangling next went on over the question of full-powers; France and Sweden aggravating the perplexities. In this year (A.D. 1644) the Dutch began to show feeling against the French: they discerned already that the Netherlands in the hands of France would be far more formidable to them, than if left to the Spaniards: 'All the world,' said they, 'knows well enough how that the French seek to become masters of all Europe, as is seen from Cassan's treatise .... we have seen on their cannon the words 'Ratio Ultima Regum[1].' Spain also, the other enemy of France, uses similar language: the sketch of the French character which appears in their documents of 1643 is very curious: 'if they (the French) get wind

[1] Meiern, Acta Pacis Westphalicae, i. p. 243, in the reply of the Dutch to the French ambassadors, § 23, June 1644.

of Austria's downheartedness, it will soon be seen how insolent they are: if the others stick to their points, France will play in a lower key.—Every one knows the French way, so insolent and arrogant to those who knock under; stand up to them and 'let them see the white of your eye,' they will soon grow quieter and cooler:—France is really weak, 'of men and money exhausted and emptied;' 'great and critical changes impend there, the Queen Mother may die, the little King himself may die, he is but a feeble child, and has had many bad illnesses; the French generals make huge demands, the Huguenots are restless:—wait then;—be in no hurry to make peace[1]'.

At the end of 1644 proposals, as a kind of prolusion to see how ideas went, were exchanged; though the actual congress was not opened till 10 April, 1645. In May of that year we find the Swedes objecting to a proposal to defer the whole religious question for a twelvemonth, leaving it to be settled at a special 'convent' at Frankfort. This, they held, had been the cause of the war: and when the Imperialists replied that by refusing this 'the war would meanwhile be ever on their necks,' it was remarked that 'this was the very thing which, in their hearts, Sweden and France desired[2].'

In June 1645, on Trinity Sunday, the main Proposition for Peace was first formally set forth: it resolves itself into this—The Peace shall (1) guarantee the independence of every European state, large or small: (2) it shall determine and secure the position of Protestantism in Germany, solving the long-vexed questions as to toleration and church-property: (3) it shall remodel the constitution and determine the authority of the Empire; and (4) finally, it shall give such 'satisfaction' to Sweden and France, as their efforts and successes enable them to wring from the torn and exhausted frame of Germany. With most of these matters we have nothing to do: the 'satisfaction' to France, and the general effect of the Peace on the career and prospects of France alone concern us.

[1] Meiern, Acta Pacis Westphalicae, i. p. 69.
[2] Ibid. i. p. 414.

The States represented in Westphalia could not but be jealous of each other; and all of them together were specially jealous of France: her interference seemed to be most selfish, and her interests and aims clashed with those of the others, whereas her partner Sweden, aiming solely at a firm footing on the south shores of the Baltic, came into collision only with Poland and North Germany.

Thus, then, when the powers learnt what large demands were made at Paris and Stockholm, and that the Emperor was not averse to granting them,—he being only desirous of saving what he could out of the wreck,—a great storm of opposition broke out on all hands[1]; the powers endeavoured to prove to themselves and to the world that there was no need to pay so high a price for peace. The great increase of the strength of France, chiefly arising from the genius of those two young masters of war, Enghien and Turenne, was as yet undiscerned by them; Forstner, in 1646, describes the state of France, as she then appeared to a German: 'France, like a fickle sea, ever eddying with internal movements, is casting up troubles which far exceed all that have gone before; the people are exasperated by exactions, the nobles by continual losses, the clergy by unwonted taxation and war waged by the state against the Pope, the Parliaments by the diminution or abolition of their liberties; the country is full of parties and factions; had these but a head[2] war would break out at once; a child-King and an Austrian Queen who has no authority; the Cardinal (Mazarin) a foreigner, whom the French hated, has but precarious sway, and his rule will last only so long as he can satisfy the profusion, the avarice, or the ambition, as the case may be, of the Princes; the strength of the country diminishes daily; Bernhard's army, its only stay and nucleus, is perishing utterly, while the French soldiery, unused to arms, is not hardy enough to withstand the snows of Germany, or

[1] Forstner, Epistolae negotium Pacis Osnabrugo-Monasteriensis concernentes (A.D. 1646), p. 5.

[2] Such as Condé would no doubt become, he thought.

to endure the task and toils of war[1].' So the French claims were resisted and fought over for more than three years after their statement in 1645: the most notable proof of the fear and dislike felt for France appears in the unwonted spectacle of a treaty of peace between Spain and her rebellious subjects the United Provinces. On the 30th of January, 1648, these two powers solemnly and finally brought their long struggle to an end. Thereby the Dutch began their second period of resistance to foreign domination, and set themselves, for the first time, in opposition to the growing power of France. It is said that the little Louis XIV was taught by this defection of Holland to regard the Provinces as his natural and permanent foes, and treasured up in his unforgetting unforgiving heart a determination to punish them with extinction, whenever opportunity might serve.

The main treaties were signed much later in the year; that of Osnabrück, between the Emperor and the Swedes, is dated 27 July/6 August 1648[2]; that between the Emperor and France at Münster bears date of October 24, 1648[3], at which time it was also agreed that the treaties of Münster and Osnabrück should be counted as one, and should form the basis of the Peace of Europe. Thenceforth they are known by the common name of the Peace of Westphalia.

What did France eventually gain? Her contention with Spain continued unsettled; for the court of Spain, having detached the Dutch from the French side, thought itself strong enough, in the face of the exhaustion and internal troubles of France, to continue the war independently. Otherwise, the French monarchy gained largely by the treaties: not so much in territory as in consideration, and in the destruction of the central authority in Germany. But for the timely change in Holland, and the later Revolution in England, there would have been nothing to restrain the advance of a French domination in Europe.

[1] Forstner, Epistolae, p. 5. [2] Meiern, Acta Pacis, &c., tom. vi. p. 128.
[3] Ibid. Register, p. lxxxvii.

The following are the points in the treaty which concerned France: (1) The circle of Burgundy (that is, the Spanish Netherlands) was to remain a member of the Empire, after the close of the Franco-Spanish war, the Emperor and the Empire binding themselves not to interfere in that struggle. (2) The 'Lorraine controversy' was simply deferred. (3) The Elector of Trèves was reinstated in his dignities, which he had lost as a friend to France; and the strongholds of Ehrenbreitstein and Hammerstein were restored to him. (4) An eighth Electorate was erected for the Palatine House, and the Lower Palatinate given back to its old rulers. (5) The House of Hesse Cassel, the firm friend of France, was restored. (6) The Swiss were declared clear of all Imperial jurisdiction. All these conditions precede the cessions to France, which formed the centre and heart of the treaty[1]. (1) The three bishopricks, Metz, Verdun, and Toul, with their districts, including Moyenvic, passed formally from the overlordship of the Emperor to that of the King of France[2]. They had, in fact, been subject to the French crown since 1552. (2) Pinerolo also was definitely put under the French overlordship[3]. (3) Breisach and the Austrian possessions in Alsace passed to France—that is, the Landgraviate of Upper and Lower Alsace, the Sundgau, the Provincial Prefecture over the ten Imperial cities, viz. Hagenau, Colmar, Schlettstadt, Weissemburg, Landau, Oberenheim, Rosheim, Münster (in S. Gregory's Valley), Kaisersberg, and Turingheim; all with their rights and dependencies[4]. (4) France obtained the right to garrison Philipsburg[5]: moreover a certain number of fortresses on the Rhine—Benfeld, Rheinau, Hohenbar, Neuburg on the Rhine, and Elsass-Zabern[6]—were to be dismantled, and from Basel to Philipsburg no fortresses or works might be built on the right[7] bank of the river. As France had the two keys of the Rhine, above and below

[1] Meiern, Register, p. lxxvi. §§ 69 sqq. [2] Ibid. §§ 69, 70.
[3] Ibid. § 72. [4] Ibid. § 73. [5] Ibid. § 76. [6] Ibid. § 81.
[7] The Instrumentum Pacis Cæsareo-Gallicum says 'in citeriori ripa'—and the document is issued by the Emperor. Meiern, Register, § 82.

Strasburg, Breisach and Philipsburg, as well as her own line of defence along the Vosges, this stipulation amounted to a promise on the part of Germany to leave the whole Rhine valley at the mercy of the French. On the other hand France gave up the four forest-towns, Rheinfeld, Seckingen, Lauffenburg, Waldshut, all on the Rhine above Basel and below Constance; also Hauenstein, the Black Forest, and the Upper and Lower Breisgau with all its towns, and the whole Ortnau: the navigation of the Rhine should be free from all hindrance whatever.

Thus in the end the actual territorial increase of France was the Austrian Alsace, and no more. The real advantage, however, was very great: the power of Germany was fatally broken; she did not recover her true position till the days of Frederick the Great, more than a century later, when the victory of Rosbach in 1757 shook the domination of French politics, ideas and tastes from off the neck of the Germans. The Rhine, with all its Teutonic memories and traditions was no longer a German river; at its mouths the Dutch were free, and the navigation of the stream no longer in German hands; the prosperity of the great Rhine-cities languished and decayed: higher up, the river was bridled by Philipsburg and Breisach, and the French lilies waved down its left bank for the whole length of Alsace[1]: even at its source the river was no longer German; for the Peace of Westphalia declared the legal independence, not only of the United Provinces, but of Switzerland herself.

The result, so far as communications were concerned, was greatly in favour of France: while Austria could no longer stretch out her hand to help Spain in the Netherlands, France on the contrary had won a new roadway into Holland, which escaped all risk of complications with the Belgian provinces; for the great Church Electorates of the Rhine were completely

[1] Excepting at Strasburg, and in such places as belonged to lords who were the immediate vassals of the Empire. See Map, opposite p. 136.

in her hands, and, as has truly been said[1], 'the petty members of the Empire in Western Germany would have preferred throwing themselves into the arms of France,' rather than be dependent on the Imperial will. The Empire itself was paralysed; the House of Austria, so far as the Imperial dignity is concerned, was rendered completely impotent.

[1] W. Menzel, Gesch. Deutschland, cap. ccxi (II. p. 395, English translation). See also the composition of the League of the Rhine in 1658, below, p. 134.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE FRONDE. A.D. 1648–1653.

THE Peace of Westphalia was for France the starting-point of a new career in foreign relations, although she was not able to take advantage of it till she had brought her long-standing quarrel with Spain to a satisfactory close at the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659.

And this struggle was in its turn deferred by a wave of reaction against royalty, which swept over Europe and threatened almost every throne. The absolute power of the Papacy had been greatly limited, until, in the days of Alexander VII, the Pontiff took but little part in the administration of the State[1]: Spain, the chosen home of absolutism, was tottering under the blows inflicted by the eighty years' war; the independence of the Dutch, combined with the revolt in Catalonia, having brought her very low: the House of Austria, which would have been autocratic also, had it been victorious in the long war, was curbed and weakened almost to death: the smaller states of Germany came out of the war more independent and less powerful: in Sweden Queen Christina, wayward, clever, unprincipled, was gradually finding her position untenable, and, abandoning all true care of her realm, was setting Europe afire with the reports of the frivolity and scandals of her court[2]: from the United Provinces royalty had been absolutely banished: in England Parliament was steadily overcoming the Stuarts. Lastly, in France the nobles and the

[1] L. von Ranke, Päpste, Bk. viii. § 6.
[2] See Whitelocke. She abdicated in 1654.

Parliament of Paris, stirred by the exciting news from across the Channel, feeling Mazarin's hand far lighter than that of Richelieu, and much strengthened by the return of the great captains from the war, broke out suddenly into active revolt against the royal power. Their cry was the old cry of the war of 'the Public Weal,' joined with a new language re-echoed from England: the crown's power should be restrained; constitutional and individual rights established, and a parliamentary government introduced:—with these cries the war of the Fronde begins.

A wit of the Parliament, one Bachaumont, has the credit of having invented this nickname; he told the lawyers of that august body, that 'they were like schoolboys playing in the town ditches with their slings, who run away directly the watchman appears, and begin again when his back is turned[1].' The name took the fancy of the town; Retz at once adopted it, and it formed, as was the case with the scornful acceptance by the Dutch nobles of the opprobrious name of the 'Geusen,' a kind of party sign, which the 'Old Fronde' found very useful at the outset.

But where in France could the elements of true constitutional life be found? The whole life of this new movement lay in Paris. The 'Old Fronde,' as it was presently[2] called, to distinguish it from the later movement of the nobles, was divided into two parts; first, that of legal and parliamentary

[1] *Fronde*, a sling, from Lat. *funda*, by epenthetic insertion of *r* (see Brachet, Historical French Grammar, p. 80). The origin of the nickname is found in De Retz, Mémoires, tom. ii. p. 54 (ed. 1777): 'Bachaumont s'avisa de dire un jour, en badinant, que le parlement faisoit comme les écoliers qui *frondent* dans les fossés de Paris, qui se séparent dès qu'ils voyent le lieutenant civil, et qui se rassemblent quand il ne paroît plus. Cette comparaison fut trouvée assez plaisante.' Retz says that he himself took up the pleasantry, and that same evening had a great quantity of hat-strings made to resemble slings, and distributed them through the town: 'the effect was incredible: everything was "à la mode de la fronde," bread-rolls, hats, gloves, kerchiefs, fans, trimmings.' He considers that it was a most lucky hit, and helped much to sustain the party. Nothing could better have shown the frivolity of the whole affair.

[2] In 1650.

resistance, headed by the Coadjutor Retz; and secondly, that of civic disturbance, burghers and mob led by the 'idol of the markets,' the Duke of Beaufort. The 'New Fronde,' the party of princes and nobles, headed by the Prince of Condé, and supported by the most brilliant ladies and gentlemen of the time, gave a striking and baneful character to the struggle, and marred the constitutional hopes and prospects of the more sober supporters of the movement.

The Parliament of Paris was in truth but little fitted for the part it wished to play: it was first dazzled by the memory of its resistance to Richelieu, and then, by false analogy of name, deemed itself the counterpart of the English Houses of Parliament; whereas it was but a central law court, home of official not of constitutional life. The movement of the Parliament was one of state-officials, not of the nation: 'the younger men,' says von Ranke, 'fresh from their books, called it a Roman Senate'; and that was as misleading an analogy as the other. In early days the 'Parliament' which moved with the King had been a true council of peers and lords, lay and spiritual, not very closely organised, and with indefinite duties; yet having decidedly deliberative functions: St. Louis gave emphasis to the magisterial and judicial work of the body; Philip the Fair planted it permanently in Paris in 1302, while other and lesser Parliaments or Law Courts were established at the capitals of different provinces: Charles V placed it in the old Palace of S. Louis. At first, like the original Council, it was composed of clergy as well as lay folk; but as early as 1319, Philip the Long decreed that prelates might sit therein no longer; and that even the Abbot of S. Denis, if he became a prelate, should cease to keep his seat. The Parliament was thus absolutely cut off from the King's Great Council, which became the Court of Appeal from the Parliament as a law-court, and occupied the position held in this respect by the English House of Lords.

In the minority of Charles VIII, when the Parliament might have interfered in constitutional matters with weight and dignity,

it refused to do so, and stood aside, limiting its own action to matters of law: it actually declined, at the time of the States-General of 1484, to deal with questions of finance; nor did it even demand to be in any way represented. It was left for the Father of his country to place a final barrier between the noblesse and the lawyers. The bailiffs and provosts had been mostly noble, and acted as the successors of the ancient counts and viscounts, who had large legal powers and duties; and the four great Bailiffs of S. Louis were the Judges of the Realm: but Louis XII forbade any to sit as judges (or to enter the Parliament) who were not 'literate and graduate'; and as the noblesse were above knowing anything about letters or degrees, this absolutely excluded them. From that moment all fell into the hands of lawyers, who, in theory the lieutenants of noble officers, became in reality the judges and law-authorities of the kingdom[1]. Francis I wished that his Council and the Parliament should form one body, and be the first of the sovereign courts; this however came to nothing. No constitutional or lawgiving character attaches to them: they had no relations with or roots in the country; at best they were a learned and solemn body, of whom the Parisians were proud, and who, by the accident of their duties as registrars of the royal edicts, became the defenders of the liberties of the Gallican Church; then, when Paris became the heart of the League-movement, the Parliament found legal and constitutional reasons for resisting royalty; it was especially violent against Henry IV. It was a body with narrow prejudices: it raised its voice in condemnation of every salutary novelty: it loved all vested interests; in behalf of the scribes it objected vehemently to the printing press in the fifteenth century; it resisted the establishment of the French Academy; it pronounced in favour of Aristotle against modern chemistry; and was little fitted to take higher flights or to stand forth as the champion of the liberties of France[2]. It may perhaps be said

[1] See Voltaire's Histoire du Parlement de Paris, c. xxvii.

[2] Ducange gives us the early uses of the word Parliamentum: (1) Collo-

that the Parliament of Paris had at this time advanced opinions, for France, as to its own legislative and constitutional status; the prominent part played by the great lawyers in the Rebellion troubles in England doubtless encouraged their French brethren to stand forward. But they had ideas without the slightest power of giving effect to them; it was an intellect without a body: nor did France, as it soon appeared, care to give form and substance to the resistance of the lawyer-class.

It was not that there was a lack of feeling in the country; for the people were far from indifferent to their own grievances; they had not, nor had ever enjoyed, any recognised way of expressing their wants, save by the 'cahiers' of the Third Estate, whenever the States General might meet; and even these, useful as they are as evidence of the real condition of France, had never proved of any true efficacy, nor had brought relief. And so the French people were, like brute beasts, suffering and dumb; the whole breadth of the land 'travailing and groaning together.' Richelieu's administration had been hard enough; that of the Italian Mazarin was far worse. The foreigner was a selfish intriguer, as so many Italians at the French Court had been before him; he could scarcely speak the French language correctly[1], and cared nothing for the welfare of the people whom he ruled, and on whom he was fattening and flourishing. The condition of the finances was worse than ever: the yearly levies heavier and heavier; and the

quium, quod vulgo dicitur Parliamentum,' a parley, usually in a monastic parlour. (2) 'Solemne aliquod colloquium,' as between grandees, such as S. Louis and the Pope; or at public meetings. So Villehardouin has 's'assemblerant à Parlament, et fu li Parlament à cheval emmi le champ'; or Villani, 'a Parlamente nella piazza vecchia.' (3) Then, civic assemblies for public business, as at Toulouse, Puy, Narbonne; a southern usage. (4) Also of Universities. (5) Then, the assembly of all nobles of the realm, this use being the leading one in England, but also in France; thus Louis VII held at Vézelay a 'Magnum Parlamentum' of archbishops, bishops, abbots, and a large part of the barons of France; no commons were present. (6) Lastly, comes the sense of a local law-court, for which alone the word is used in France in more modern times.

[1] For an instance among others see Mémoires du C. de Retz, i. p. 111.

people ever poorer. The practical business of loans and taxes had fallen into the hands of certain 'publicans,' who were bankers or 'partisans,' the latter name standing for those who provided the King with ready money, and undertook to collect the taxes in return for their own benefit[1]. On this they grew very rich, while the state withered away. All finance fell into confusion; the public service gained nothing; corruption ruled supreme. The head of the financial business of France was also an Italian, Emeri, a creature and close friend of Mazarin, a man of evil repute, violent and harsh, faithless, completely selfish, and 'the most corrupt soul of his age,' as Retz says[2]. He was not content only to oppress the helpless country-districts, but must need attack Paris herself: he endeavoured to exact fines from the builders and owners of houses in the suburbs; and in 1647 laid a duty on the necessaries of life. 'One might write a history of the resistance which this impost has excited in every country in Europe[3]'; from this came the burlesque war of the Fronde, as much as the heroic revolt of the Dutch. Twice the Parliament resisted the Court with success: the house-fines were abandoned; the tax on food was not levied: Emeri was disgraced and exiled. Great was the indignation at the Court: Mazarin had first shown weakness, and now he showed its after-stroke, irritation. To minds so hot, as all were in Paris, not much is needed to kindle a flame: the news of Condé's great victory at Lens[4], received with high exultation at Court, made Anne of Austria, who now showed much the same qualities as were displayed a century and a half later by Marie Antoinette, eager to inflict a sharp blow on the independence of the Parliament of Paris, and through it on the capital itself.

This brought the Court at once into collision with the popular coadjutor of the Archbishop of Paris, Paul of Gondi[5],

[1] L. von Ranke, Französische Geschichte, iii. p. 43.
[2] Mémoires du C. de Retz, i. p. 137.
[3] L. von Ranke, Franz. Gesch. iii. p. 45.
[4] See above, p. 92.
[5] Appointed A.D. 1643. The Bishoprick of Paris (raised to archi-

himself afterwards Cardinal and Archbishop: we know him best by the name of the family barony, Retz. He had no advantage of personal appearance, being but an ill-looking man[1]. He was an eloquent and persuasive preacher; a man who had been wild and dissolute in earlier days, but had somewhat reformed himself, and was anxious to reform his clergy; he retained still the excitability of an open and lively nature, loving tumults and civic troubles: like a true Italian, the town was all to him, the country nothing—only, in his case, the town was Paris: he was active, ready for intrigue, ambitious, openhanded; his desire to lead had been fired, as has often been the case with generous natures, by reading Plutarch's Lives. We have a trace of it in one of his sayings: he was deep in debt, and when some one remonstrated he replied, 'Caesar owed six times as much as I,' and only thought how far he was below his model. He was neither greedy for money, as most public men then were, nor was he false: he was of ready wit, impulsive, honest, vain and kindly, as vain men so often are; need we add that the populace adored him. There was in him no trace of true political sagacity, no broader views as to the duties and destinies of France, or as to the welfare of the people: he was in fact only fitted to be a great party-leader. He had none of the unconsciousness of nobler natures, who trusting sometimes to their star, more often to their faith in themselves and in God's supreme guidance, are content to move forwards resolutely, if in the dark, towards great ends. In his Memoirs he lets us see this, by contrast with his grand

episcopal dignity at this time) had become almost a kind of property in the Gondi family. Three of them in succession held it. The founder of their fortunes in France was Antony of Gondi, who came with Catherine dei Medici into France; his son Albert, a man of courtly manners and vices, married Catherine of Clermont, who brought him the barony of Retz; he was the head of a new branch of the family, and was made Marshal of France in 1573. One of his brothers, Peter, was Bishop of Paris; one of his nephews, Henry, was also Bishop, then Archbishop; and he again was succeeded by has nephew Paul, the famous coadjutor.

[1] Mémoires du C. de Retz, iii. p. 39, where he says of himself, 'Madame de Carignan disoit un jour devant la reine que j'étois fort laid; et c'étoit peut-être l'unique fois de la vie où elle n'avoit point menti.'

contemporary Cromwell. Bellièvre told him that Cromwell had one day said to him, 'No man ever climbs so high as when he knows not whither he is going.' 'You know,' replied De Retz, 'that I hold Cromwell in horror: but great as they may call him, I despise him for such a maxim: it is the sentiment of a fool.' Cromwell afterwards took the opportunity of saying, with noble scorn, to the French Ambassador in reply, 'I only know of one man in the world who despises me; and that is the Cardinal de Retz[1].' He would willingly have led the Court; but Mazarin was there, and there was no room for both[2]: he would not have objected to set himself at the head of the nobles; but there were far greater men among them, who would never give place to him; wherefore he was fain to become a great demagogue, and to wield the power he loved over the Paris mob. Thus he talks of it, at the beginning of the troubles: 'Every one followed me; and I needed them too; for I found a whole mob of tag-rag and bobtail before me, all armed. I flattered them, caressed them, conjured, menaced them; and finally persuaded them[3].'

On S. Louis' day, 1648, the Coadjutor preached before the young King and Anne of Austria, and 'explaining the will of S. Louis to the King, had commended to him the care of his great towns[4],' in the full belief that the Court was determined to follow wise and friendly courses towards the capital; the next day he was rudely awakened from his dream: after the Te Deum for the victory at Lens, the Queen Mother's officers had arrested the 'bon-homme Broussel,' as Retz calls him with a touch of scorn, the commonplace, honest, and well-loved counsellor of the Parliament, who had led the legal opposition to the government. Straightway all Paris was in a ferment; barricades were thrown up; it was thought that the town would be sacked.

[1] Mémoires, iii. p. 46.
[2] One may read a character of Mazarin drawn by his foe in the Mémoires du C. de Retz, i. p. 133.
[3] Mémoires, i. p. 177.
[4] Ibid. pp. 163, 164.

De Retz, throwing himself into the midst, succeeded in appeasing the citizens; though not before he had run much risk even of life: a musket-shot had broken the arm of a gentleman close by; one of the pages who carried his train was wounded, and De Retz himself knocked down by a stone; a citizen pointed a gun at him, but the ready coadjutor looked coolly at him, and said, 'Unhappy lad, if only your poor father could see you!' which so took the man aback, that he dropped his gun, and recognising who it was, shouted out his name; whereat the crowd, which had become more than menacing, came cheering round him. He bravely persevered and carried the matter through, by promising to get Broussel released. The people were much excited by the news from Naples; had not Thomas Aniello, 'Masaniello' as they called him there, overthrown the accursed tax-gatherers? If the Parliament was roused by the English Houses and their struggle, the brief triumph of the Neapolitan fisherman was equally potent with the Parisian mob: for a moment the Court was in real peril. Anne of Austria, proud and contemptuous towards the people, was totally unable to realise the true position of affairs. It was with the greatest difficulty that De Retz obtained the release of Broussel. Quiet was restored: but both people and Parliament were suspicious, and ready for resistance or outbreak. The Parliament felt more and more certain that it was a Roman Senate and an English House of Commons all in one.

The Queen Regent and Mazarin naturally deemed themselves unsafe in Paris; they escaped to Ruel (September 1648). Then the Parliament took the lead; and Condé himself, hating Mazarin, went over to them; Anne of Austria was obliged to come to terms, which for the moment looked as if constitutional life were about to begin in reality. The Parliament demanded, among other things, a kind of Habeas Corpus Act[1]; this, however, the Court refused, saying 'that the royal authority could not endure such a limitation'; so completely had autocratic

[1] Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz, i. p. 223.

ideas prevailed. The Court acceded to the demand that it should return to Paris, though Mazarin was not dismissed.

On the very day on which the King came back (24 Oct. 1648) the Peace of Westphalia was concluded: Mazarin could now attend solely to home-politics, and attempt to carry out the violent and despotic ideas of Anne of Austria. He gathered troops, secured Condé and Gaston and other chief men, and early in 1649 the Court again slipped out of Paris, escaping to S. Germain, as a kind of adventure, an excitement and a defeat for the capital. The whole city was roused to frenzy; large sums were voted, militia enrolled, the clergy, led by De Retz, joined the Parliament: and finally Paris began that fatal policy of alliance with the discontented nobles and princes, which brought the whole movement into derision. Paris was speedily filled with a brilliant crowd: the Duchess of Longueville [1], who, as De Retz says, by preferring passion to policy fell from the high position of a heroine and leader of a great party to the level of a mere adventuress [2], was their leading spirit; under her influence her brother Conti, her husband the Duke, and the Duke of La Rochefoucauld, and others, notably the Duke of Beaufort, grandson of Henry IV, the darling of the mob, 'the king of the markets,' all hastened to Paris, and signed an Act of Union with the citizens. The fickle Parisians were easily dazzled by the splendour and beauty of these high lords and dames, and thought that they had in this alliance a great force of fighting-power, and natural leaders. The princes condescended to drill the civic militia; the court-ladies deigned to invite the burghers to their assemblies: the Parliament made amazing efforts: the local Parliaments in all parts of France declared at once for their legal brethren of Paris: revolts broke out in more than one province. For a moment it looked as if the Royalists would be overmatched; as if the life's-work of Richelieu were to be reversed; as if lords and lawyers would make two chambers

[1] Condé's sister. See Table I, p. 87.
[2] Mémoires du C. de Retz, i. p. 299.

of Parliament in the English sense, and dictate terms to the Crown. Yet in truth the addition of seeming strength was but weakness; instead of a resolute stand for laws and liberties, the civil war became a last selfish struggle of the nobles against the central power.

Condé was now heartily with the Court, and before his war-like genius even the heroism of the citizens at Charenton, who perished to a man, was in vain; all the places round Paris were in the hands of the Royalists after a few days. The very points which, in the War of the Public Weal, the nobles had held against Louis XI and the capital, were now occupied by the King, against capital and insurgent nobles. The details of this so-called War of the Fronde are unworthy of notice:—the whole thing was a burlesque; the great lords and ladies made a jest of everything; there was no seriousness on their side; high fêtes, banquets, love affairs, intrigues, ruled all things. Even when defeated they could only laugh: a flood of epigrams, pamphlets, caricatures appeared; these gross 'Mazarinades,' which reflect the temper of the time but too clearly, were directed against the Court, and especially against 'Dame Anne' and her lover the Cardinal: the Parisians were never weary of opprobrious epithets and nicknames; if a carter lashed his horse he called it 'a cursed Mazarin'; the very word became a kind of imprecation[1]. It was not even the literature of hatred; it was the scum of a dissolute age which is not enough in earnest even to hate; the noble women were distinguished above all for their daring dissoluteness[2].

The eyes of the citizens were at last opened to this heartless selfishness of their new allies: they saw with dismay that their efforts were all coming to nothing; that their prosperity was at an end, and that their contributions had been eaten up by their magnificent friends. They discerned that these nobles had their price, and that the moment Paris ceased to pay them, the Court

[1] Mémoires de Guy Joli, tom. i. p. 69.

[2] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV, chap. iv. (pp. 40, 41, ed. Louandre, 1869), has collected many of these jests and nicknames.

would buy them up. It is easy to see how completely Richelieu had done his work: no real strength or nobleness lay behind this frivolous bravery and gallantry: the great Cardinal had destroyed all that was strong, and had debauched the rest, by leaving to them position without power. These are the people who afterwards formed the pattern for the Court of Charles II; to them England owes the worst moral excesses and scandals of the Restoration.

The Parliament of Paris became more than uneasy; on the other side, the Court, in spite of Condé's successes, grew daily more alarmed: the Spaniards, rejoicing at this quarrel, which so well occupied France at home, recognised the Parliament as a constitutional power, and offered to support it with a strong force on the Flemish frontier. It was heard that the Duchess of Longueville had won over Turenne, and that that consummate captain was marching on Paris from the east with the old veterans of Duke Bernard's army—one golden bough of war and rapine having been torn away from them by the Peace of Westphalia, they rejoiced to find another springing up before their eyes at Paris. The news from England, that Charles I had perished on the scaffold, startled both parties for a moment into seriousness: the Parliament of Paris was specially desirous of peace; anything would be better than this miserable subjection to noble frivolity and selfishness; and the Court abated its high language. The happiness of France has been that, in her worst times, when her natural chiefs abandon or betray her, she has had, usually among the ranks of the official world, some upright and noble citizen ready to place himself in the breach and to save her from herself. Such was Matthieu Molé, the President of the Parliament, a man of the utmost firmness, 'the most fearless of his age,' entirely loyal to his duty, respectful towards authority. He came of a legal family[1], and was the Selden of

[1] His father, Edouard Molé, a Parisian, was son of a counsellor of Parliament and himself a counsellor; he had afforded priceless help to Henry IV in 1593, by determining the Parliament to declare against female succession, whereby he secured the throne to the Bourbons.

the time: he was not afraid once more to put his foot within the threshold of the Court: as before he had gone to demand the release of Broussel, so now he went to Ruel to mediate for peace. His efforts were successful: the first draft of the Peace of Ruel was signed in March 1649.

The nobles, the Parliament, and Paris were all dissatisfied; and with some reason, for the treaty annulled the independent acts of the Parliament, promised the disbanding of its army, and forbade it to sit in future. Molé was ill-received on his return; his life was threatened. The treaty was not ratified, and fresh negociations began: the fear of Turenne was stronger than before; it was seen that the Archduke Leopold, who had already entered Champagne, could at any time form a junction with the nobles in Paris: the Court offered better terms; the old demands of the lords were repeated—as if it was still Louis XI on the throne—each claiming a great lordship and an independent position. The Court meanwhile bought off Turenne's veterans: instead of marching on Paris, they turned back, and their great captain had to escape into Germany. The nobles threatened to make a fresh revolution, and to eject the Parliament, which honestly wished for peace: then the lawyers found means to make terms with the Queen Mother, and the second Treaty of Ruel was signed. This closes the period of the Old Fronde.

The nobles, though they took what was offered them, and accepted the peace, had no thoughts of keeping it. 'The Monarchy is too old,' said they, 'it is time it were done with': and this, irony of history! with Louis XIV already on the throne. The old miserable intrigues and follies still went on: one side was as bad as the other. Condé, with all the vanity and impulsiveness of his personal character, and with the class-pride of a French noble, would not act under Mazarin, and withdrew from Court. Round him gathered the froth of the noblesse, the 'petit-maîtres,' as they were now first called. The lines of party-struggle seem to have changed. The Parliament had less to fear from the Court than from the nobles: the

nobles were not only selfish and frivolous, but actually unpatriotic; the lawyers saw with apprehension the approach of the Spaniards, who entered Rheims: it was known that the chiefs of the New Fronde were intriguing with the Spanish Court.

The sobriety of the lawyers and even their sense of propriety were shocked by the reckless brilliancy of the leading ladies of the party. 'Women played throughout this time the most splendid part, which brought out all their clever wits; theirs was a life of adventure and romance, crowded with pleasures and perils; they took the lead in love affairs or warlike expeditions alike, in fêtes and conspiracies; never had they enjoyed so much influence in the State . . . these Duchesses, beautiful, witty, dissolute, when they chose to play a part in politics brought into public affairs their sordid passions, their narrow views, their frivolous ideas, and sacrificed to their vanity their honour, their own peace of mind, and that of their houses[1].'

Now Condé seemed likely to tower over them all; and all hated him in return. He had mortally offended the Queen Regent; the great nobles in Paris liked him little better; the Parliament and the Coadjutor once more began to deal with the Court. Anne of Austria was ready for any steps so long as she could avenge herself on Condé: she was reconciled with the citizens, and knowing that the nobles would not resist, and that the Old Fronde would rejoice at the removal of its formidable friends, she arrested Condé, Conti, and Longueville; they were safely imprisoned in Vincennes.

With this stroke the year 1650 had begun. As the Queen had foreseen, the Old Fronde rejoiced, the Duke of Beaufort returned to Court, and the blow for the moment seemed likely to put an end to the troubles. But Condé was strong in the provinces; in Normandy, Guyenne, and Burgundy, the nobles revolted; the Duchess of Longueville escaped, and after a series

[1] La Vallée, Histoire des Français, iii. p. 195.

of romantic adventures reached Holland; then, joining Turenne at Stenay, she persuaded him to declare against the Court.

The provincial revolts were put down: that of Guyenne, the most serious, with some difficulty; Turenne, in concert with the Spaniards, and at the head of their troops, had marched from the north as far as to Rethel[1], whence he pushed on a flying body of cavalry to seize Vincennes and to release the Princes. In much alarm Mazarin forthwith sent them down to Havre: the royal army, commanded by Du Plessis Praslin, defeated Turenne and recovered Rethel: by the end of 1650 the New Fronde was completely overthrown.

A fresh combination of the two Frondes followed: Anne of Gonzaga, the ablest woman of the day, and as eminent in political intrigue as the Duchess of Longueville was in political love-affairs, brought them once more together. This again paralysed the Court: the Duke of Orleans was won over to the opposition; Mazarin's life was in danger; the Queen Mother found herself besieged in Richelieu's Palais Cardinal, now and henceforth called the Palais Royal. She decided on another flight from Paris; Mazarin went first and made for Havre; but the Parisians were too vigilant; they insisted on seeing their little King, and held the Queen a strict prisoner.

Mazarin, ever willing to yield before a storm, rather than to face it after the manner of Richelieu, now determined, as he was the chief element of unpopularity, and as no hope of agreement existed whilst he remained at Court, to withdraw altogether for a time: he went to Brühl, not far from Cologne, and there watched the progress of affairs. Before taking this step, both to allay the irritation of parties, and also thinking that the more heads of party were free, the more dissensions must arise,—he went down to Havre, and threw open the prison

[1] Rethel on the Aisne had a chequered history in these years. Turenne took it (in the interests of the New Fronde and Spain) in 1650; it was retaken by the royal troops the same year: Condé (again in the Spanish interest) took it again in 1652; Turenne (this time on the King's side) retook it from the Spaniards in 1655. Mazarin bought the Duchy of Rethel, and left it to La Meilleraie, husband of Hortense Mancini, his niece, who became Duke of Rethel-Mazarin.

doors, releasing the Princes, who returned at once in triumph to Paris.

Condé made temperate counsels impossible by his harsh and haughty bearing [1]; though he allied himself with Matthieu Molé, an act which ought to have guaranteed some moderation, he quarrelled with every one round him. The Old Fronde turned towards Anne of Austria; De Retz was sent for; and while Mazarin from Brühl advised his royal wife [2] and mistress to win the Coadjutor at any price, De Retz himself declared that, so long as his irreconcilable foe Mazarin was not recalled, he was quite willing to range up on the Queen's side [3]. His price was a Cardinal's hat, and the hope of succeeding to the influence and favour which Mazarin enjoyed with the Queen: he had no suspicion whatever as to their relations, and walked, as his vanity often led him to walk, in a fool's paradise. She promised that Mazarin should never come back; and the reconciliation took place in August 1651. Condé, too weak to face this new alliance, withdrew, and raised the standard of revolt in Guyenne. The Queen Mother was so enraged against him that she openly said, 'He must fall, or I;' and it looked as if the Court was never in such peril: in the south Guyenne was in full outbreak, Condé was preparing to march on Paris; in the north Turenne with the Spaniards were to invade Champagne in concert with him, and to penetrate to the capital.

Who could count on any combination? The princes of the north, the Duke of Bouillon and Turenne his brother, were won over to the Court, and at once paralysed the Spaniards in the Netherlands; Turenne, instead of helping the Frondeurs, took the command of the royal troops against them. The Queen Mother had proclaimed the young King's majority, and

[1] Mémoires du C. de Retz, iii. p. 5: 'La reine outrée de la continuation de la conduite de M. le prince, qui marchoit dans Paris avec une suite plus grande et plus magnifique que celle du roi et celle de Monsieur . . . presque au désespoir, résolut de jouer à quitte ou à double.'

[2] See above, p. 89.

[3] Mémoires, iii. p. 8: 'En tout ce qui ne regardoit pas le retour du Cardinal, je la servois non seulement avec fidélité, mais avec ardeur.' See also her promise, ibid. p. 10.

had taken him with her to Poitiers, 'to show him to the Fronde. Once clear of Paris, she thought she might recall her mainstay, Mazarin: he came back in triumph, met by the young King in person, and welcomed with all the warmth of her impetuous nature by his royal wife.

In this campaign begins the brilliant career of 'Mademoiselle,' Gaston's daughter. She, the most high-spirited and generous of the Frondeurs, threw herself into Orleans, thus barring the return of the Court towards Paris; Anne of Austria had to march farther east, and to cross the Loire at Gien. There Condé pressed the Court-party hard; and the King might have been made prisoner with his following, had not Turenne, with a mere handful of men, held the Frondeurs in check, till the royal party got away safely towards Paris. Turenne had saved the Monarchy. Both armies moved for the capital: Condé besought the municipal authorities to receive him; the Parliament however and the magistrates remembered that he was in league with Spain, and refused; nevertheless, the crowd was with him and very violent against the 'Mazarins,' as the royalists were called.

Things now looked ill for the Frondeurs: Harcourt with a loyal force had put down the insurrection in Guyenne; the Spaniards had been driven out of Champagne; Turenne had inflicted a sharp blow on Condé's army at Étampes. He then marched eastwards to observe the Duke of Lorraine, who with a strong force of adventurers had come down into France, while Mazarin succeeded in dissipating them, as once before he had bought off the veterans of Bernard of Weimar. Meanwhile Condé, taking advantage of Turenne's absence, marched up to S. Cloud, hoping to get into Paris; the citizens still steadfastly closed their gates. Desiring to take up the old favourite position above the town at Charenton, Condé now crossed below Paris, and marched round the northern suburbs, past S. Denis. There Turenne, who showed as much promptitude and dash as his great rival could have displayed, fell swiftly on the rear of the Frondeurs (2 July 1652); Condé rallied

them, and got his whole force together over against the Porte Saint Antoine, behind an earthwork running down to the Seine. There the battle raged vehemently; the royalists stormed the earthwork, and in a hand to hand fight in the faubourg gradually pressed Condé back towards the walls of Paris. Had the magistrates stood firm, his career would have been ended on that day. But within the walls was the courageous Mademoiselle; she placed herself at the head of the populace, overbore all opposition, and threw open the Saint Antoine gate. She then hastened to the Bastille, which commands that gate, and herself directed the discharge of the heavy guns on the royal troops. Under cover of this unexpected fire, the broken remnants of Condé's force at last found refuge within the walls.

Paris underwent one of her paroxysms of feeling: the 'party of order' at the Hotel de Ville were attacked by a furious mob, urged on by Condé and his brother Conti; a savage massacre of some fifty of the most worthy and moderate citizens stained the momentary triumph of the Princes[1]; a new government was proclaimed, and all Paris was in full revolt against the Court. But it had no solidity, and could not maintain itself: the better citizens still negociated with the royalists; the Parliament was transferred to Pontoise, under the presidency of Molé; a new revolution took place in the capital; De Retz, who had stood entirely aloof from Condé, was the Monk of the time, and, carrying with him the good wishes of all moderate citizens, went in solemn state to Pontoise to beg the King to come back.

In order to facilitate peace, Mazarin once more withdrew, this time to Sedan: the Parisians, finding their detested enemy gone from Court, at once accepted an amnesty, in spite of all Condé's efforts. Outgeneraled by Turenne, and seeing all turn against him, and the royalists growing daily firmer and

[1] It should be recorded to the credit of Mademoiselle that she did her utmost to save their lives.

stronger, he at last gave way, and, rather than humble himself before the Court, withdrew into Champagne and joined the Spaniards.

This was the signal for the breaking up of the whole resistance to the Crown: the Parisian government fell to pieces of itself; Gaston of Orleans had to withdraw to Blois, and troubles us no more with his inconsequent ambitions; the King with a small army at his back entered Paris in October. Though an amnesty had been promised and granted, there were so many exceptions that all who had taken a prominent part in the late troubles were excluded from it; all the chief members of the New Fronde were exiled; Condé, as a traitor, was condemned to death; De Retz, still formidable from his influence over the people, was seized and imprisoned at Vincennes; his career was over. For a while he wandered about Europe; then, in 1664, on resigning the Archbishopric of Paris, he was made Abbot of S. Denis; there he lived quietly, cured of politics; paid off his enormous debts[1], and spent much of his time in the composition of those Memoirs, which give us in their irregular flow, their lively sallies, their genial vanity, a true and vivid picture of their self-drawn hero.

The voluntary exile of Mazarin had been the condition of the reconciliation between Paris and her King: yet it was not long before Louis XIV sent for him from Sedan. The Cardinal at once returned, escorted by Turenne, and greeted with the loud acclamations of those very citizens who, a few months before, had heaped on his name every insult which scorn and hatred could supply. The young King received him as a son welcomes his father; the Parliament which but now had condemned him, lavished compliments on him and cringed for his notice. A little later (1654), when the same body showed something of its older spirit and resisted the great weight of taxation caused by the Spanish war, the young King, we are told, came in from Vincennes, and appeared in the Chamber

[1] Which amounted to over £160,000 of our money.

of the Parliament[1], where with a few haughty words he forbade the meetings of that august body, and seemed to close for ever its political career.

[1] The picturesque details, the boots, the spurs, the riding whip, are all apocryphal.

CHAPTER VIII.

WAR WITH SPAIN: MAZARIN'S DEATH.

A.D. 1654–1661.

WHEN the war of the Fronde came to an end in 1653, and Louis XIV found himself absolute master of France, he was lord of a disordered kingdom; taxation was oppressive and ill-managed; society lay in a stupor, feeling that all government was paralysed, and that in this state the country must yet grapple with a foreign foe, whose weakness had not yet been detected. For Spain was, if possible, in a worse state of confusion than France herself; and Condé, her new and brilliant general, no match for the steady genius of Turenne. It has been well said of these two masters in war, that as Condé grew older he lost his early fire and military insight without becoming wiser or more prudent, while each campaign made Turenne more daring as well as more skilful. The careers of the two great soldiers form a striking contrast: it is genius without industry pitted against high talent combined with infinite painstaking, and coupled with a desire for the scientific treatment of the art of war. Turenne was in fact a worthy pupil in strategy of three of the greatest teachers of that age; of Gustavus Adolphus, whose military principles he almost seems to have inherited, and of his two noble uncles of the House of Orange-Nassau. The brilliant Condé was sure to fail when pitted against Turenne. This partly disposes of

Voltaire's remark, so dear to French military feeling,—that so long as Turenne commanded Spaniards, Condé with his French army defeated him: but when they changed sides, and Turenne commanded Frenchmen, then he in turn defeated Condé[1]. The truth is that Condé led Frenchmen when he was young and at his best, and Spaniards when he was older; by which time the more mature powers of Turenne had fully ripened. Something is doubtless also due to the decaying state of the Spanish power at this time, and to the growing confidence and warlike fitness of the French soldier: but the characters of the two generals, and the fact that Condé, when he commanded Spaniards, was in a totally false position, are quite sufficient to account for his failure when pitted against his rival.

All disputed questions on the Rhine and over the Alps having been peacefully settled by the treaties of 1648, only three portions of the French frontier were now open to attacks of war: first, the north, from the sea near Dunkirk to the Luxemburg country, where the Spanish Netherlands touch French soil; secondly, just beyond that district to the east, in the still-debated Lorraine district; and thirdly, on the Pyrenean frontier, more particularly at the eastern end, where Roussillon borders on Catalonia. In these parts we shall find the dim and languid war still smouldering on.

It was in November 1652 that Condé had made his actual alliance with Philip IV of Spain; and the Duke of Lorraine had also joined them. The question that now arose was, whether this great Prince of the Blood would be strong enough to break into France, and to overcome the absolute authority of the Crown. That authority had fallen into the hands of a boy, of an unwise and passionate woman, and a supple Cardinal, whose foreign policy had splendidly carried out the views of his great master Richelieu, but who, in home affairs, had nothing of the strong hand and indomitable spirit of the autocratic minister. The

[1] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV, chap. vi. (ed. Louandre) p. 61.

six years from 1653 to 1659 proved decisively that the strength was not in Condé, nor in the Spanish monarchy at his back.

The struggle was to be fought out in the north. There the enemy's frontier lay near the heart of the French kingdom; there Spaniards and refugee-Frenchmen could most easily co-operate (thanks to their possession of Rethel [1]) with the Duke of Lorraine. The natural direction which an invasion from Brussels takes is that through Arras and Amiens: over and over again had the Burgundian or the Spanish banners gleamed under the walls or on the towers of these cities. Now however Champagne by Rethel, rather than Picardy by Amiens, formed the roadway of attack.

Three plans of defence were suggested against Condé when he first marched into France: the first, to put no army in the field, but to fortify and garrison every possible point, and so, like Charles V in the English wars, to wear him out; these however were the tactics of a long-past age: the second, to occupy Compiègne in great force, and watch his advance, ready at any moment to take him in flank or to cut him off; this was venturesome, and left Paris wellnigh undefended: and lastly, and this was Turenne's advice, to set in the field a fair force of troops to dog Condé's footsteps, to move on side by side with him, seizing strong points, always ready to vex and harass his advance, but never fighting a battle. This course, specially suited to Turenne's gifts, was adopted and proved successful.

The result of the campaign was that Condé had no chance of distinguishing himself, and though he took Rocroy, which he had relieved so splendidly in 1643, he wore out all his time and strength in the siege of that town, and achieved no more. On the other hand the Royal troops took Rethel in the north and Bordeaux, thus pacifying Guyenne, in the south.

The next year (A.D. 1654) was equally disappointing to Spanish hopes. Neither could Condé feel content with the soldiers he commanded, nor they with his imperious boastful

[1] See above, p. 115.

ways. No fruitful combinations with him seemed possible. It was agreed that the Archduke Leopold and he should this year enter Artois: the citizens of Arras were known to be favourable to the Spanish cause, and it was hoped the town might speedily be reduced. But Louis XIV, who was making his first essay in arms at the siege of Stenay, which lies on the Meuse not far from Sedan, close to the troublesome country of the Dukes of Bouillon, and not far from the frontiers of Lorraine, sent Turenne to annoy the Spaniards at Arras; and with consummate skill he held them in check, till Stenay had fallen. He then attacked and defeated them thoroughly: they owed their escape from utter destruction solely to Condé's vigour and genius. The two sieges had been a kind of trial of strength: that the French took their town, while the Spaniards not only failed to capture theirs, but suffered besides a crushing defeat, was a decided triumph for Louis XIV and Turenne. The King from this moment onwards showed a great predilection for siege-warfare.

The war in the north made but little progress in 1655 and 1656; in the former year it went somewhat in favour of the French, in the latter of the Spaniards, who by their relief of the siege of Valenciennes, and by the skilful isolation and defeat of La Ferté's army, rendered all Turenne's plans for the campaign abortive: the French had to fall back. This considerable check made matters very critical for Mazarin. For affairs in the interior were far from quiet; the movement of the Fronde, though checked, was not extinct: throughout France, the noblesse, instead of branding Condé as a traitor in arms against his country, watched his movements with deep interest, ready on the first promising opportunity to rise against the Crown: the southern Provinces were on the verge of revolt; there were actual peasant-risings in one or two districts: the Parliaments, if silenced, were offended and unconvinced: and lastly, the Church, especially in the persons of the parochial clergy, was deeply irritated; her rights had been attacked; she showed no little inclination to embrace the views of the more independent

Jansenists. These elements of disturbance did not break out into open hostility against the Court, because they had little coherence, and because Condé's successes on the frontier were never decisive enough to enable him to come to Paris, and assume the leadership of the New Fronde; while Cardinal De Retz was a powerless exile at Rome, so that the old Fronde also had no head.

These years, however, are interesting as presenting to us the early struggles of the Jansenist opinions in France. The Jesuits, after their wont, had attached themselves closely to the Court-party. The high moral standing of their body, their great intelligence, the political and social flexibility of their system, the remarkable development of their theology into a modified Pelagianism, by which, in the world-old strife between Freewill and Necessity, they chose the side which allowed most play to their energies and to their unequalled skill in dealing with the moral nature and conscience of men — all these things gave them weight in the political movements of the age, and made them the natural instruments of the new despotism of France. They could acquiesce in any form of government; but absolutism suited them best. Their whole training, the rigid subordination of their body, their perfect spy system, their doctrine of implicit obedience, all tended to this; and their moral theory also helped: they believed that they would best secure the purity of their spiritual patients by weakening their moral character, by teaching them to depend on their confessors, by 'conquest and domination of souls.' They loudly proclaimed hope for all who would obey and had a goodwill. No wonder if we find them,—whatever their professions of neutrality may be,—in Rome, at Paris, in Paraguay, wherever their principles had full play, ranged on the side of autocratic power. Against their theology the old Augustinian, we may even say the Pauline, views as to the grace of God, and the inability of human nature to attain to perfection, rose up again in strength among the Jansenists, as they were styled at this time. To a certain point this movement corresponded to that of Luther;

though it differed in this, that the Jansenists had little of that independence of thought which led Luther from S. Augustin to the Bible, from the authority of Councils to that of God himself. This was the essential difference between the Utrecht reformer[1] and the Wittemberg professor. The Augustinus of Jansen has made its mark on theological controversy; but it has in it no originality, and is not a book which, like a trumpet-call, draws the hearts of men together, ready to do or die. The Jansenists were, in fact, the Old Catholics of that age; they aimed at a restoration of the theology of the fourth century, and resisted the Papal claims and dogma of infallibility, falling back on the authority of Councils[2]. Their views brought them into direct collision with the dominant theology and the Papal Court: their political tendencies made them offensive to the new royalty of France. Their stern and strict views as to the fall of man and the recovery through God's free gift, vouchsafed to the elect alone, rendered them a spiritual aristocracy; they deemed themselves the noblesse of Christ; their confidence of the divine favour gave them a certain sense of independence, and self-assertion naturally followed. As in England, so also in France, the high view of Election seemed to fall in naturally with the feelings of the aristocracy: the great nobles of Elizabeth's Court had been Calvinistic; those of the Fronde showed a tendency, if nothing more, towards Jansenism.

The Court must surely oppose such a Church-party as this: the more so, as at first it warmly espoused the cause of Cardinal De Retz[3], and afterwards showed a wish, when it had found fa-

[1] Cornelius Jansen, a Dutchman, Bishop of Ypres, born 1585, died of the plague 1630. His Mars Gallicus, an attack on Richelieu's policy, appeared in 1635; his Augustinus, on which his fame rests, and round which the controversies of the age turned, was posthumous, not appearing till 1640.

[2] The five Propositions drawn out of the Augustinus were condemned by Innocent X in 1653, and the Papacy naturally resisted them through all the reign of Louis XIV till, in 1713, Clement XI, by the Bull 'Unigenitus,' brought the long quarrel to an end in France. The establishment of the Jansenist Archbishoprick of Utrecht under Dutch protection kept the school alive elsewhere.

[3] Mémoires de Guy Joli, ii. p. 6 (ed. 1777): '. . . que le C. de Retz étoit un homme engagé avec les Jansénistes.' Cp. also pp. 10 and 38.

vour with many French prelates, to establish the Gallican Church on a more independent basis than it had hitherto enjoyed. To English ideas a Church with firmly consolidated liberties, opposed to Ultramontanism, leaning for support on the Crown, and in return giving to the Monarchy the great help of its influence, its instincts of order, and of obedience to the powers that be, would have seemed a thing specially needful for the young King, round whose throne were so many disturbing interests. But, unfortunately, the French Crown could see in this party only one more source of dangerous resistance: true to the policy of Richelieu, the Court waged deadly war against an institution which might have tempered the evils of absolutism, and have kept alive some germs of constitutional life. The Jansenists were unlucky in the outset. Their sympathies with Cardinal De Retz at once threw them into opposition: and in France to be in opposition is to revolt or to perish, or both.

Politically insignificant and a failure, they have left in two respects a name in France. Their ascetic purity, the delicacy and noble simplicity of their cloister-life at Port Royal[1], had, one need scarcely say, little hold on the general course of French religious and social opinion, and died away, like the passing fragrance of violets on the wind.

Their lasting fame depends on their alliance with the noblest literary efforts of France. We have already pointed out the withering effect of Richelieu's rule on literature[2]: Mazarin's ministry was yet more disastrous in this way[3]: all the best writers went into opposition, and being mixed up with the violent political agitations then seething, both gained and lost by the stimulus and the dissipation of the time. Two great names stand out pre-eminent: men in no sense elements of that brilliant cycle of writers who illustrate the age of Louis XIV, but whom that age took to itself[4], just as a great wit gets the credit

[1] For this beautiful episode in French Church History see Saint-Beuve's Histoire de Port Royal.

[2] Above, pp. 50, 82.

[3] Geruzez, Histoire de la littérature française, ii. pp. 129, 130.

[4] Ib. p. 189.

of all the keen sayings of his day: these were Corneille and Pascal; Corneille the modern Æschylus of the French drama, Pascal the speculative Plato of its theology. As at a later time Voltaire was stung to vehement and brilliant effort by the generous impulses which made him defend the poor sufferers from intolerance, so in these days the genius of Pascal defending the oppressed ladies of Port Royal produced the marvellous Provincial Letters, from which the Jesuits, for all their great triumphs, never recovered. The Fronde literature is also made illustrious by the piquant pen of Madame de Sévigné, who was a cousin of Cardinal De Retz, and loved the Port Royalists. It was natural that the ready wits and pens of the time should produce memoirs of those stirring days: Madame de Sévigné's Letters are in fact memoirs in fragments[1]; Cardinal De Retz, shallow as he was and 'leader of a cabal rather than of a party,' was unrivalled in the ease and vividness of his character-drawing, in his bright quickly-touched scenes, in his quick and witty reflexions: the Duchess of Nemours, Madame de Motteville, even 'Mademoiselle[2]' herself, have all left us remarkable sketches of the time: there was also another of those brilliant ladies, who have left the impress of their wit, adventure, and daring on the scene, Madame de La Fayette, who has not only left us Memoirs but who may be regarded as the parent of the modern novel, in her 'Zaïde' and her 'Princesse de Clèves.' At the beginning of the century Cervantes had mercilessly destroyed the old Romance[3], Madame de La Fayette shewed how the void could be filled up, and how imagination, ever craving for its peculiar nutriment, might be fed from fresh and more natural pastures. The first half of the seventeenth century was the golden time of portraits; all these memoir writers were portrait-painters: these too are the days of Vandyke and

[1] Her earliest letters belong to this period; her latest were written not far from the end of the century; she died in 1696.

[2] 'Mademoiselle' is the name given to the daughter of Gaston of Orleans, the King's uncle.

[3] Cervantes published Don Quixote in 1602.

Cornelius Janssens. One name remains: weary of the bootless strife, dejected at the utter overthrow of the proud-spirited noblesse, saddened by the failure of his trust in man and woman in a frivolous and heartless age, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld drew out a mournful memorial of himself in his Maxims and Thoughts. With Pascal as its theological and philosophical leader; with Corneille as its high-souled poet, Madame de Sévigné as its wit, and La Rochefoucauld as its moralist, the Fronde, unhappy, even contemptible, in its political career, claims and deserves the high respect of posterity. Sad irony of fate! These writers, who all felt the heavy hand of the Court and were all in opposition to it, have been made, like noble captives, to swell the triumph of the splendid King, and have thrown the glamour of their genius over the literary poverty of his reign.

The time of languid and balanced warfare was now coming to an end. Mazarin, weak in the conduct of war and of home-politics, was unrivalled in the management of foreign affairs, and at this time won two great triumphs of diplomatic skill. Two dangers from abroad now threatened France: one from England, the other from Germany; both storms the astute Cardinal not only weathered, but found them helpful in urging on his country towards the goal he sought.

In England there was at last a strong government. Cromwell could interfere in Continental politics, and put an end to the isolation and impotence to which the first and second Stuart and the Great Rebellion had condemned the country. England had been absolutely unrepresented, in spite of the great interest she had in the Palatinate question, at the Westphalian Congresses[1]. Even Queen Elizabeth, wary and fearing Spain, had not ventured on a bold foreign policy: Henry VIII had only in appearance, and much to his own disadvantage, abandoned the isolated position taken up by his prudent father:

[1] England, Russia, and Poland had no plenipotentiaries or agents at either Münster or Osnabrück. See Meiern, Acta Pacis Westph. I. Beylage zur Vorrede, pp. 1, sqq.

now however Cromwell could dictate terms to Europe; and the fate of nations depended on his joining France or Spain. He did not choose his side without much consideration and cautious negociation: with the game completely in his hands, he was not likely to be rash or weak of judgment. Don Louis de Haro for Spain; an agent of Condé for the New Fronde, and, as he asserted falsely, for the Huguenots; and, lastly, Mazarin's envoy;—these all pressed Cromwell hard; and he dealt with them with coolness, skill, and success. Yet his treaties with France have been sharply censured as a grave political blunder, and as helping on that European domination which England had, a little later, to resist at such a cost. Bolingbroke[1] charges Cromwell with either shortsightedness or corrupt and personal aims: he credits him with a plan 'that has disturbed the peace of the world almost fourscore years.' But how easy it is 'to be wise after the event,' to look back on those fourscore years, instead of forward to them! It is not hard to see how the Lord Protector was led to join the French, and how unjust are Bolingbroke's strictures[2].

Cromwell had been proclaimed Lord Protector in December, 1653, and at once turned his attention to foreign affairs. The year 1654 is notable for the treaties he made: first, one with Holland, closing the bitter naval war; then, one of commerce and navigation with Sweden; then, one of like kind with Portugal; fourthly, with Denmark: the rapid rise and high pretentions of the Commonwealth are marked by the way in which the Act of Navigation[3] comes into operation after the Dutch war had ended. Relieved from all anxieties elsewhere, Cromwell was now able to consider his position relatively to the French and Spanish war.

Spain offered him no small personal bribes: she would guarantee the Protectorate to him, and get it changed into a Kingship:

[1] Letters on History, vii.

[2] Hume, History of England, ch. lxi. (v. p. 359, ed. 1848) re-echoes Bolingbroke's complaint, and thinks that Cromwell neither 'understood nor regarded the interests of his country.'

[3] Passed in 1651.

she would join him in helping Condé and the oppressed Huguenots. But Cromwell was above looking at matters from a personal point of view. Two main interests have in all modern times swayed the fortunes of England,—her religious sympathies, and her commercial needs: and at no moment of her career were these more powerful than in the years of the Protectorate. Now these were exactly the points on which England might ally herself with France, but could not possibly act with Spain. When Cromwell demanded from the ambassador of Philip IV that England should have, first, free commerce with the West Indies, and, secondly, an absolute exemption in those parts from the surveillance of the Inquisition, the envoy replied in the well-known words 'that his Master would as willingly lose his two eyes as grant these two points.' How then could Cromwell deal farther with him? Commercial exclusiveness and religious intolerance were the only basis on which Spain would treat: and these were just the two matters on which the wholesome flow of English opinion was quite determined to have no uncertainties: freedom of religion and freedom of commerce were deemed the life-blood of England's welfare. Cromwell therefore turned at once to France. He had had no good opinion of Condé's position, regarding him as weak, perhaps even as sold to Mazarin himself: as to the Huguenot discontents, a trusty envoy, whom Cromwell sent to enquire into their temper, soon found that they had no wish to raise again the standard of civil war. Mazarin had treated them prudently; and under shelter of the Edict of Nantes they were safe, prosperous, and content. Again; when the Protector interfered on behalf of the Vaudois, in 1655, he found Mazarin willing to meet his wishes; his conduct was very different from that of the Duke of Savoy: Milton's grand sonnet[1], written in this year, smites with its noble verse the 'bloody Piedmontese,' and 'th' Italian fields where still doth sway the triple tyrant,' but he adds not a breath of censure on France, although the royal

[1] 'On the late massacre in Piedmont.'

troops had taken part in the massacres. Moreover, had not France, in the late war, been the champion of the German Protestants? Had she not secured their position against the intolerant South? In fact, as Cromwell himself tells us, an alliance with Spain would have seemed to him and to England at that time a 'leading back into Egypt,' an abandonment of all 'the honest interests of the Protestant world.' He deemed Spain at all times the natural foe of freedom and England, and rejoiced to come to blows with her[1]. It was no small matter, too, that an alliance with France would remove Charles II from the neighbouring coasts. And why should Cromwell have feared the preponderance of France at this time? The war was languid in the extreme; everything indicated a state of complete exhaustion; was not England growing in influence and power with tenfold rapidity? can we imagine that Cromwell purposed to destroy the elements of the balance in Europe? His untimely death arrested all his plans: and we may be sure that had he lived posterity would never have condemned his policy. A treaty of peace and commerce between France and England was therefore signed in October, 1655; there were in it no stipulations pointing towards a military alliance: Mazarin hesitated to grant the conditions on which Cromwell offered active help. Dunkirk for England, a new Calais for the new conditions of England's commercial and maritime dominion, was a price he shrank from paying. The French Government negociated with Spain, and waited to see what time might bring forth. But time was now against the weakened combatants: their weapons almost dropped from their hands; yet they had not strength to make peace. Meanwhile, the consideration of England rose to its highest point; her power was feared by all Europe[2]; under the Protector's male and resolute leading, she had be-

[1] See Cromwell's Speech to Parliament, 17 Sept. 1656; Carlyle's Letters and Speeches, iii. pp. 166, 167 (ed. 1857).

[2] See the Lettere inedite di Messer Giovanni Sagredo (Venetia, 1839), p. 29. (Quoted by Guizot, Hist. de la Republique d'Angleterre et de Cromwell, ii. p. 239).

come the queen of the seas, and her voice was heard with respect at every Court: the brief five years of Cromwell's absolute rule made England what she had never been even in the days of Elizabeth, what she had not been since Henry V,—the leading power of the world[1]. It needed another Revolution, and a William III at the head of affairs, to restore her again to a like position. France felt this, and dreaded the inevitable alliance. But Spain was desperate and would hear of no terms: and at least a second treaty, this time offensive and defensive, was signed at Paris in March 1657. This document was destined to have solid results. It stipulated that Cromwell should land six thousand English soldiers in Flanders, and keep a fleet on the coast: their first task was to reduce, in combination with the French army, Dunkirk, Mardyk and Gravelines, the last to be placed in the hands of the French King, and the other two in those of the Protector, for England.

This treaty[2] made the rest of the campaign of 1657 decisive. The six thousand Puritan soldiers, the best fighting-stuff in Europe, were irresistible when handled by Turenne. Mardyk and other small places fell. The French hesitated that year to venture on the serious task of besieging Dunkirk; and waited till 1658, when Cromwell sent them two more stout regiments of a thousand men apiece. Dunkirk was then straitly invested; and the Court came up as far as to Calais to watch affairs. The Spaniards at Brussels, under Don Juan of Austria, became alarmed, and brought up hastily such force as could be gathered: in spite of Condé's repeated warnings, he having grown more cautious by this time, they waited neither for their guns, nor for a great portion of their cavalry; they let Turenne catch them in

[1] Mazarin saw how powerful England was as a Commonwealth, and how that form of government in able hands had in it elements of strength which the Monarchy could never develope. 'La république angloise,' he says (Lettres du C. Mazarin, p. 147), 's'établissant, seroit une puissance à redouter pour tous ses voisins, puisque, sans exagération, cette puissance *seroit cent fois plus considérable que n'étoit celle des rois d'Angleterre.*'

[2] Dumont, Corps diplomatique, VI. Partie ii. p. 224. Dumont also prints an apocryphal treaty in the same vol., p. 178. The Treaty is given in Guizot's Cromwell, ii. p. 597.

his grip, victims of their own pride and ignorance. 'Did you ever see a battle?' said Condé to the young Duke of Gloucester[1] just before the allies came up. And when he answered No, he added grimly, 'Then you are going to see one lost to-day.' And so it was: the struggle lasted four hours; the English regiments displayed conspicuous valour and steadiness; and before day closed the Spaniards were utterly routed and gone, leaving four thousand prisoners behind them. Ten days later Dunkirk capitulated: Louis XIV entered the town the next morning, and loyally handed it over to his English allies. The act was not lost on France, where it caused no little murmuring, the French clergy being specially indignant that a Catholic town should fall into Puritan hands. The allies swept all before them: Gravelines was taken, Furnes, Oudenarde, Ypres fell: the Spaniards trembled in Brussels. Splendid embassies bore witness to the cordiality and triumphs of Louis XIV and his 'brother,' the Protector.

Had exhausted Spain been strong enough to renew this hopeless war, she must have succumbed before another blow now inflicted on her by Mazarin's diplomatic skill. In April 1657 Ferdinand III had died; his son Leopold had never been elected King of the Romans. Mazarin,—one can imagine it not done very seriously,—sent Lionne to the Electoral Diet to advance the claims of Louis XIV to the Imperial diadem, and under cover of that candidature to hinder, if possible, the election of Leopold. His first object was not attained, Leopold becoming Emperor; but it was under conditions which were a distinct triumph for France. The new Emperor undertook to make no war, within or without the empire, to the detriment of France; and specially to send no help to the Spaniards. And besides this, Lionne succeeded in building up a League of the Rhine (August 1658) for the preservation of the Westphalian Peace. Bavaria, the Rhine-Electors, the House of Brunswick, the King of Sweden, ranged themselves on the side of the

[1] Younger son of Charles I.

French monarch, who seemed by this act to stand out as the Protector of Germany. He cut the Netherlands off from Spain, and secured his own roadway, when he needed it, into Holland.

The Spaniards could struggle no longer: they sued for peace. Things were prepared for it on every hand: Spain was desperate; matters far from settled or safe in France; in England the Protector's death had come very opportunely for Mazarin; the strong man was no longer there to hold the balance between the European powers.

Questions as to a Spanish marriage and the Spanish succession had been before men since 1648; the Spaniards had disliked the match, thinking that in the end it must subject them to France. But things were changed; Philip IV now had an heir, so that the nations might hope to remain under two distinct crowns; moreover, the needs of Spain were far greater than in 1648, while the demands of France were less. So negociation between Mazarin and Louis de Haro on the little Isle of Pheasants in the Bidassoa, under the very shadow of the Pyrenees, went on prosperously; even the proposal that Louis XIV should espouse the Infanta of Spain, Maria Theresa, was at last agreed to at Madrid[1]. The only remaining difficulty arose from an unexpected quarter. The Cardinal had in all seven nieces, the most striking women of the time: one of these fair maidens, Maria Mancini, had so captivated the young King, that he was wildly in love with her, and would hear of no other wife. It is said that Mazarin awhile encouraged the royal passion: but even if so, ere long more prudent counsels conquered so perilous an ambition; and he set himself to turn Louis from his project, and with no small difficulty succeeded. The King at last abandoned his youthful and pure passion, and

[1] If any one would study a specimen of Mazarin's diplomacy, his heartless disregard of those he used and threw away, and his belief that the Spanish marriage 'quelque rénonciation qu'on lui fît faire' would surely unite the two kingdoms, he should read the account of the negociations in Mignet, i. pp. 32 sqq.

signed the Treaty of the Pyrenees, condemning himself to a marriage of state, which exalted high the dignity of the French Crown, only to plunge it in the end into the troubles and disasters of the Succession War.

The treaty of peace begins with articles on trade and navigation: then follow cessions, restitutions, and exchanges of territories.

1. On the Northern frontier Spain ceded all she had in Artois, with exception of Aire and S. Omer; in Flanders itself France got Gravelines and its outer defences. In Hainault she became mistress of the important towns, Landrecies, Quesnoy, and Avesnes, and also strengthened her position by some exchanges: in Luxemburg she retained Thionville, Montmédy, and several lesser places; so that over her whole northern border France advanced her frontier along a line answering to her old limits, and thereby got into her hands a number of all-important points, fortified places, keys of access or defence. In return she restored to Spain several of her latest conquests in Flanders; Ypres, Oudenarde, Dixmüden, Furnes, and other cities.

In Condé's country France recovered Rocroy, Le Câtelet and Linchamp, occupied by the Prince's soldiers; and so secured the safety and defences of Champagne and Paris.

2. More to the East, the Duke of Lorraine, having submitted with such good grace as might be, was reinstated in his Duchy; a step which, as Mazarin well knew, did not tend to strengthen the French border on that side. But France received her price here also, the Duchy of Bar, the County of Clermont on the edge of Champagne, Stenay, Dun, Jametz, Moyenvic, became hers. The fortifications of Nancy were to be rased for ever; the Duke of Lorraine bound himself to peace, and agreed to give France free passage to the Bishopricks and Alsace. This was the more necessary, because Franche-Comté, the other highway into Alsace, was left to the Spaniards, and such places in it as were in the King's hands were restored to them.

Far out in Germany Louis XIV replaced Jülich in the hands

THE FRONTIER
OF
FRANCE,
After 1648 & 1659.

REFERENCE.

- England
- United Provinces
- France
- Germany
- Spain
- Switzerland

Districts ceded to France
in 1648 // in 1659

of the Duke of Neuburg; and that element of controversy, the germ or pretext of these long wars, was extinct for ever.

On the Savoyard border France retained Pinerolo, with all the means and temptations of offence which it involved: she restored to the Duke her other conquests within his territories, and to the Spaniards whatever she held in Lombardy; she also honourably obtained an amnesty for those subjects of Spain, Neapolitans or Catalans, who had sided with France.

Lastly, the Pyrenees became the final, as it was the natural, boundary between the two Latin kingdoms: if one may allude to an apocryphal saying [1], while Louis XIV as a boy created the great mountain-frontier, as an old man he swept it away. Roussillon and Conflans became French: all French conquests to the south of the Pyrenees were restored to Spain.

The Spanish King renounced all claims on Alsace or Breisach: on the other hand the submission of the great Condé was accepted; he was restored to all his domains; his son, the young Duke of Enghien, being made Grand Master of France, and he himself appointed Governor of Burgundy and Bresse: his friends and followers were included in the amnesty.

Some lesser stipulations, with a view to the peace of Europe, for the settlement of the differences between Spain and Portugal, between the Dukes of Savoy and Mantua, between the Catholic and the Protestant Cantons of Switzerland, and an agreement to help forward peace between the Northern Courts, worthily close this great document, this weighty appendix to the Treaties of Westphalia.

A separate act, as was fitting, regulated all questions bearing on the great marriage. It contains a solemn renunciation, intended to bar for ever the union of the two Crowns under one sceptre, or the absorption into France of Flanders, Burgundy, or Charolais. It was a renunciation which, as Mazarin foresaw long before, would never hold firm against the temptations and exigencies of time [2].

[1] Il n'y a plus de Pyrenées (A.D. 1700).
[2] See Voltaire, Siècle, p. 75 (ed. Louandre).

The King's marriage with the Infanta Maria Theresa of Spain did not take place till the next year, by which time Mazarin's work in life seemed wellnigh over; racked with gout, he had little enjoyment of his triumphs. Yet he lived to see one more result of his labours, the Peace of Oliva, which was made after the unexpected death of Charles Gustavus of Sweden, the brave and adventurous forerunner of Charles XII; it was agreed to and signed under the mediation of France: it confirmed the entire independence of Prussia, making her, under the solid and vigorous rule of the Great Elector, a substantive power in Northern Europe.

Thus Mazarin had been successful in all his foreign policy, partly by his own consummate skill in diplomacy, partly by the genius of his agents, especially of Lionne. He had closed the Thirty Years' War by the Peace of Westphalia: he had allied himself with England under Cromwell, and was prepared to ally himself also with the new order of things in that country: he had triumphantly carried through the war with Spain, and had won for France more by the Peace of the Pyrenees than she had gained at Münster; he had seen his King wedded to the Infanta, with most brilliant prospects and possibilities before him; and now in this northern peace he made France the arbiter even in most distant struggles. Well might he have said 'the whole world is at peace; and France is satisfied.' Inferior to Richelieu in grandeur of character, in singleness of aim, in heroic power of struggling against opposition, he was far more successful in the results of his policy, reaping where Richelieu had sown. He was far from being a 'Sicilian Pantaloon,' as Guy Patin scornfully called him: the skill and success of his foreign policy redeems him from the discredit of his weaker moral nature, and from the effects of his damaging proximity to Richelieu. If his great master was the more vehemently hated, Mazarin was the more vehemently abused: from nine to ten thousand political pamphlets, more or less scurrilous, written by a swarm of small writers, chief of whom was Scarron, the lord of burlesque, and husband of that placid

Françoise d'Aubigny, of whom we shall hear more, bear witness to the violence of party-feeling in France[1].

Mazarin was flexible and patient; 'time and I' was his favourite phrase and motto: as La Rochefoucauld acutely says of him in comparison with Richelieu, 'Mazarin had bold heart and weaker mind; Richelieu a daring mind, and timid heart!' Richelieu was too sagacious and fortunate ever to fall; had he fallen, he would never have risen again; Mazarin, twice fallen and exiled, speedily climbed again with a cheerful and dauntless spirit. Where Richelieu crushed and destroyed the nobles, Mazarin made them his observant friends: for he held the purse-strings and the appointments to lucrative offices in his own hands; it is wonderful to mark how docile they grew. It may be true, as he himself said, that 'if he had not a French tongue, at any rate he had a French heart;' for he certainly raised the land of his adoption to a great height of power and glory: this however holds good only of his foreign policy and dealings. For France at home Mazarin had no feeling; not one element of good government is seen in the whole time of his administration; the whole internal organisation of France was left unmended; 'it is indubitable,' writes Colbert, who knew the state of France at this time if any man did, 'that if Cardinal Mazarin understood foreign affairs, he was utterly ignorant of home government[2].' He had done his work, and was already beginning to be an embarrassment to Louis XIV, when death removed him from the King's right hand. He had grossly, though perhaps not purposely, neglected the early education of the Monarch, and seemed to find satisfaction in prolonging his state of tutelage. That, however, was coming to an end of itself: the failure of Mazarin's health made the transition easy. When, after the close of the tedious negociations of the Isle of Pheasants, the Cardinal came slowly back to Paris, successful, but worn out, it was seen that he

[1] Mazarin's librarian, Naudé, made a careful collection of all the Mazarinades.

[2] Colbert, Testament politique, p. 12.

could not last long: the gout proved almost fatal to him in the autumn of 1660. Thenceforward he passed his time in giving the young King sage lessons of conduct and government, all tending towards that autocracy which Louis so successfully carried out. He taught him that a first minister was bad, a favourite worse; he advised him to hold the reins himself, and have none but heads of departments under him; he told him with Italian finesse that treaties are only made to be evaded: he showed him the deplorable state of finance, and the importance of that branch of government.

Then he betook himself to the arrangement of his own affairs: his physicians giving him, early in 1661, no hopes of recovery. His gigantic fortune gave him much anxiety: he first placed all his wealth in the King's hand; and Louis, by an act of magnanimous generosity, returned the splendid gift to its dying master. Then Mazarin deemed he might will away this colossal property, the spoils of France, gathered with the eagerness of a miser and the meanness of a petty trader: he had wrung it from the peasant, or won it at play, for he played high and was lucky; it embraced also the profits of contracts, and even the spoils of piracy, for he made his gains out of war or peace, from traffic clean or unclean. His nieces, two Martinozzi[1], and five Mancini[2], who had made splendid alliances, worthy of their wealth and beauty, were his heiresses: he founded the Collège des quatres Nations, for the education of noble children from the provinces attached to France by the Treaties of Münster and the Pyrenees; to this college he bequeathed his splendid library, the spoils of Richelieu's earlier legacy. The bulk of his property he left to his niece Hortensia,

[1] Married to the Duke of Modena and Armand Prince of Conti.

[2] There were five Mancini nieces :—
(1) Laura, m. the Duke of Mercœur, and had died in 1657.
(2) Olympia, m. Eugene Maurice of Savoy, Count of Soissons, the mother of Prince Eugene.
(3) Maria, m. Lorenzo di Colonna.
(4) Hortensia, m. the Duke of La Meilleraie.
(5) Maria Anna, m. the Duke of Bouillon.

who had married the Duke of la Meilleraie; he, to perpetuate the Cardinal's name, became Duke of Mazarin. What was this amazing fortune? Voltaire tells us it was 'two hundred millions as we count them now[1];' Fouquet valued it at from forty to fifty millions, in his day—a much smaller sum, perhaps worth one hundred millions in Voltaire's time. If, as Martin thinks, its value now would be fivefold, we find that he left behind him what is equivalent to two hundred and fifty million of francs, or about ten millions of pounds of our day. No wonder he was himself appalled! that he seemed afraid to face this treasure, that he desired there should be no inventory of it made!

These things arranged, the Cardinal resigned himself to die 'with a serenity more philosophic than Christian;' and passed away on the 8th of March, 1661.

The age of great ministers is ended: Louis XIV steps proudly on the scene; a new and splendid act of the drama begins. France, under his grandiose rule, will rise to that height of dignity which has, from that time to this, dazzled the eyes of the French nation, so readily carried away by military glory abroad and magnificence in government at home. We have now to sketch the absolute monarchy in its highest prosperity; to draw its triumphs, its baneful brilliancy, which scathed those who resisted it, and consumed those who were its subjects: it led France on to that melancholy time of impotence and misery, which preceded, as a long and monotonous prelude, the outburst of the nation at the Revolution.

[1] Siècle de Louis XIV, ch. vi. p. 79.

BOOK V.

THE BOURBON MONARCHY AT ITS HEIGHT. A.D. 1661–1715.

CHAPTER I.

LOUIS XIV RULES. A.D. 1661–1668.

Louis XIV reigned from 1643 to 1715. When his father died, his uncle Charles I was yet on the throne of England, though he was fast descending the slippery and fatal incline, which led him, six years later, to the scaffold: when Louis placed the reins of power in the feeble hands of his great-grandson, the Hanoverian George was ruling at S. James'. Thus the two Revolutions, which have left their indelible mark on English history, and the establishment of the German monarchy, fall within the limits of this long and wonderful reign of two-and-seventy years. The struggles of England moulded and secured her modern constitutional life: the splendid era of Louis XIV fully developed that proud conception of national unity under an autocratic prince for which France had long been preparing. That Louis might reign supreme, his ancestors had steadily contended against feudal independence, had crushed local liberties, had held down civic life, had destroyed all that could have formed the wholesome basis of a constitutional and national existence. Their

reward was the 'great age,' the apotheosis of the great Monarch, as we read it in Voltaire's romance.

When Mazarin died in 1661 Louis had already been seated for eighteen years on the throne. His great minister had done all for him: 'the King interfered in nothing; the Cardinal did not wait on him, but he, several times a day, visited the minister, making court to him like a simple courtier. Mazarin would receive him unceremoniously, scarcely rising from his seat when the King entered, and never escorting him even to the door of his room when he went out[1].' Louis felt toward him an almost filial sense of respect and affection; he had been accustomed to lean on him, to see him holding in fact the position of a wise step-father, and had both implicitly obeyed the Cardinal's orders, and had drunk in greedily the Cardinal's maxims for his future guidance. When he seemed to be madly in love with Maria Mancini, Mazarin's niece, he had borne with all the Cardinal's chiding and advice without resistance; he had even let him withdraw the favoured beauty, and with strange docility had allowed him to substitute in her place that fair blue-eyed little lady, the Infanta, a Flemish rather than a Spanish beauty, of whose sweet character Louis soon tired, and whom he treated with scandalous neglect[2]. The young monarch was at any rate placid and heartless. His earlier days had been passed in obscurity; even at the famous scene with the Parliament of Paris he was a mere agent, doing as he was bidden: his heavy phlegmatic face and grave manner struck men, seeming to indicate laziness and self-will, rather than any deeper qualities. He had been fond of pleasure, was quiet, docile, and naturally timid[3]; his mental powers seemed to be of a low order[4], and nothing had been done for his education: at a later time he spoke with bitterness

[1] Mémoires de Montglat (Petitot, II. li. p. 111).
[2] Mémoires de Mad. de Motteville (Michaud, II. x. p. 529).
[3] Œuvres de Louis XIV, Considérations sur Louis XIV, i. p. 97.
[4] 'Au dessous du médiocre,' says Saint-Simon; but he is a prejudiced witness. Mémoires du Duc de Saint-Simon, viii. p. 76 (ed. Hachette, 1872).

of his deficiencies, and says that he once even tried to commit suicide[1], in despair at his own shortcomings. La Porte, his valet, tells us in his Memoirs that the boy King could learn nothing: his preceptor Péréfixe, the historian of Henry IV, was deeply distressed at his stupidity: his mother spoilt him and kept him from his book. He knew no Latin, and could scarcely read and write; he never absorbed a single scrap of the exact sciences[2]; though full of religious feeling and prejudices, he had, as was said at the time, 'the faith of a charcoal-burner[3],' so ignorant was he of the veriest rudiments of Christianity.

When they sent him to the army, he showed no boldness nor sign of genius for war: he had neither the youthful fire of his grandfather, nor the rash courage of his father. He seemed content to amuse himself with dances, with gambling, in which every one played high, and with little love-affairs: he was content that his mother and Mazarin should rule supreme over him. But that mother had vigour and character, and inspired him towards the end of this clouded period of his reign with ideas of his own duty and dignity, urging him boldly to occupy the royal place: nor did the Cardinal always neglect the teaching of the boy; at the very end of his life he was very anxious to instil into his uncultivated and tenacious mind those rules of kingcraft, that 'métier de Roi[4],' to which Louis so often alludes: Mazarin left behind him maxims and instructions in this great art, which the young King sedulously learned, and even copied out fair: it is not improbable that they reappear in those Memoirs of Louis which still remain in the monarch's own handwriting, and from which we get so much of our belief as to his kingly

[1] Saint-Simon, viii. p. 83.

[2] 'Non è coltivato da alcuna scienza,' Sagredo, quoted by Ranke, Franz. Gesch., iii. p. 195, note.

[3] 'La foi d'un charbonnier.'

[4] Mazarin exhorted him 'à lire et à apprendre son grand métier de Roy,' Mad. de Motteville (Michaud, II. x. p. 480). He tells us how much he thought of it in a MS. printed in his works (ed. 1806), ii. p. 455.

qualities. Whatever others thought, Mazarin understood the young man's nature: 'he will set off late, but will go farther than others,' he said of him, when some one deplored the King's idleness: and the famous saying, 'he has in him the stuff of four Kings, and of a worthy man besides,' expresses the Cardinal's insight:—a great King first, and afterwards a man[1]. He besought him, no less significantly, to 'cultivate his strong natural talent for dissimulation.' Le Tellier also, who had made the King's character a special study, had already noticed 'the basis of severity and seriousness with which he knew how to strengthen the natural kindliness of his character[2].'

France could not see him as he appeared to them: the people rejoiced at the Minister's death, because they thought Louis would be a kindly, well-beloved Prince; the Court looked forward to a brilliant age of fêtes and splendours; the country reckoned on peace and prosperity under the young Apollo's fostering beams. Little did they foresee the strength and heat of 'one coming forth as a giant to run his course;' and great was the universal amazement when, the day after Mazarin's death, Louis XIV presided in person over his Council, and addressed to the Chancellor Seguier the memorable words, 'Hitherto I have been right willing to let my affairs be managed by the Cardinal: it is time I should now take them into my own hands. . . . . The scene changes: I shall apply different principles in the government of my State, the management of my finances, and foreign negociations, from those of the late Cardinal[3].' From that moment he took, gravely and determinately, the burden of his 'trade of kingship'

[1] Mémoires de Choisy (Petitot, II. lxiii. p. 192).

[2] Mad. de Motteville, Mémoires, A. 1661 (Michaud, II. x. p. 522).

[3] Mémoires de Louis XIV, Cimber et Danjou, II. viii. p. 336, note. These Memoirs of Louis XIV were written about the year 1670 or 1671. Speaking in them of 1661 he writes, 'C'est ici *la dixième année* que je marche, comme il me semble, assez constamment dans la même route, ne relâchant rien de mon application.' Mémoires historiques (Œuvres, ed. 1806, I. p. 37). They were first published by M. de Gain-Montagnac in his edition of the works of Louis XIV, 1806.

on his shoulders, and bore it without flinching for four and fifty years. He declared with almost passionate emphasis against ever having a first Minister: all should centre in himself; to him foreign envoys should address themselves directly; when one of them spoke to him of his Ministers, the King corrected him with the words, 'you mean our agents[1]:' the clergy, nobles, men of business, bureaucracy, must look to him directly for their orders: he was in all things the very opposite of those feudal gentry, whom Commines described so well by telling us that, if ever any spoke to one of them on business, their only answer was a languid 'Parlez à mes gens,'—'don't trouble me, speak to my people about it[2].' Without his assent the Chancellor's seal should never be affixed to any deed or document; his people should have direct access to him; every Saturday was set apart[3] to hear their 'placets' or petitions. Mazarin was the last great Cardinal-Minister: the churchmen who are prominent under Louis XV belong to a different order of things; no one can compare Dubois or Fleury with George of Amboise, Richelieu, or Mazarin. It was Mazarin himself who taught Louis to make this point clear: he had warned him never to allow power or influence to either a churchman or a soldier, for he dreaded the ambition of De Retz and the power of the brilliant Condé. Nearly forty years after this time, when Louis gave a paper of instructions to his grandson Philip, on his accession to the Spanish throne, he says, 'I end with one of the most important pieces of advice that I can give you. Never let yourself be ruled; be ever master; never have a favourite or a first minister[4].' And one day, discoursing on popular government, he did not hesitate to say, that any element of

[1] 'Vous voulez dire nos *gens d'affaires*.' Les Portraits de la cour, Cimber et Danjou, II. viii. p. 371.

[2] Commines, l. x. (Dupont, I. p. 86.)

[3] This devotion to his people's plaints did not last. He grew very difficult of access after a time. Mémoires de Saint-Simon, viii. pp. 87, 88 (ed. Hachette, 1872).

[4] Œuvres (ed. 1806), ii. p. 460.

the kind was 'worse than a first minister.' Hitherto King and Minister had been two distinct powers in the State of France; henceforth they should be one: there should be no question of 'Le roy et celui qui règne[1].'

To make sure of this, Louis saw clearly that he must have agents, not ministers; chief-clerks, heads of departments, not independent statesmen, at his side; that he must divide and equalise the functions of these men of business, not allowing any one of them to become too prominent. Colbert, who had been Mazarin's servant, and who was to be seen coming to the palace with a neat satchel of black velvet under his arm, like the smallest of bagmen[2], was the man after the King's own heart.

And this, in its turn, imposed on Louis a devotion to the business of government, and much hard dry work. As, however, he had a soul for routine, he did not flinch: he said he 'did not like those do-nothing Kings who were led by the nose[3].' At first the courtiers laughed, and thought these new interests would soon pall; these grand resolutions, they said, might last three months: they soon found it was no laughing matter; year after year went by, and no great change ensued. It is true, his ardour relaxed in some points; and those who saw under the surface could see that though there was no first minister, there was always some one, some Colbert, or Louvois, or Maintenon, who really guided the King's movements, and to a large extent ruled for him.

The minister under Louis XIV was, as has well been said, like the high priest in an idol's temple[4]; and, as often happened, to the idol was given great worship, the central position in the temple, the theory of power unlimited; while the high priest enjoyed the real authority over the crowd of

[1] Justus Lipsius Balzac, Aristippe 144, quoted by von Ranke, Französische Geschichte.

[2] Mad. de Motteville (Michaud, II. x. p. 525). The King used to call him his 'petit commis.'

[3] Mad. de Motteville (Michaud, II. x. p. 506).

[4] Stephen, Lectures on the History of France, ii. p. 223.

prostrate worshippers. Yet, in the main, he carried out his own plan; and thereon really rests the fabric of his renown. He gave from two to three hours twice a day[1] to public business, working diligently and unweariedly through it, sustained by a high sense of duty, not diverted by any amusement or pursuit, however dear to him. In his Memoirs[2] he exults with much self-gratulation over his success: he conquers his timidity, is no longer afraid to speak in Council, sees with keen pleasure that people begin to believe in him, and recognise his perseverance, that foreign envoys more and more come straight to him. He is sustained by that self-consciousness which forms so striking an element in his character. A strain of intense self-satisfaction gleams through all his somewhat commonplace Memoirs: he is half-frightened at men's praises; fears they may be mere adulation, yet hopes and suspects they are true; and is determined at any rate to merit them[3]. Whoever else may have doubted for him, he had in him at least one element of greatness and success;—he believed firmly, almost fanatically, in himself.

What then was there in this handsome young prince, with his heavy serious face, his reticent proud manner, his fine carriage, 'every inch a King,' his graceful figure in the dance or on horseback, to arrest the attention of the world and give a name to an age?

He had all the qualities which strike the eye: and was, as Bolingbroke acutely remarked[4], 'if not the greatest King, the best actor of majesty at least that ever filled a throne;' as a King should be, he was courteous, dignified, calm and 'debonair,' firm in act and speech, and constant: he had a great sense of duty and propriety; and said himself that a King should act according to the dictates of good sense; he cultivated that habitual discretion and seriousness of manner which often

[1] He worked about five hours a day, not eight, as his admirers have declared.

[2] Mémoires historiques, Œuvres de Louis XIV (ed. 1806), i. pp. 20, 21.

[3] Œuvres, i. pp. 38, 39.

[4] Letters on History, vii. (p. 68, ed. 1870).

cloaks ignorance or want of capacity[1]. 'He spoke little, that little however was to the point; was reserved, was thought rather stingy, did not often laugh[2].' These characteristics were backed by one marked quality, strength of will, which could be obstinacy: and were all made subservient to one persistent passion, the inordinate desire of reputation and glory[3]. Perhaps he drew his greatest strength from his firm belief in the 'divinity that doth hedge a King:' it seemed to him that Kings have a special inspiration; it is no question of a Divine right, as in agitated England, where the monarch had to seek a new basis for his autocratic ideas, but a full assurance of power and Divine presence: Louis feels himself to be God's Lieutenant, answerable to Him alone: the rest of mankind have only blindly to obey[4]: he must rule, and has a special and enabling gift.

He aimed at imitating his grandfather Henry IV[5]; yet indeed he was very different from him, and in many respects a very inferior man. It is true that he never subordinated his duties to his pleasures, as Henry often did; but then Henry had a warm heart, and Louis a cold one[6]: in all other points the contrast is unfavourable. He had none of his genius, nor of his marked and racy personality; great as a King, Henry was yet more striking as a man: his good sayings ring with life and originality. Louis, as a man, was pompous and commonplace: his Letters, and there is no better test, strike us as dull and heavy; the epigrams attributed to him were made for him; as other princes have had their speeches worked up for them, so Louis owes much to Voltaire and other

[1] Considérations sur Louis XIV, Œuvres (ed. 1806), i. p. 89.
[2] Portraits de la Cour, Cimber et Danjou, II. viii. p. 371.
[3] 'Un seul et même désir de gloire.' Mém. historiques, Œuvres (ed. 1806), i. p. 8.
[4] 'Que quiconque est né sujet obéisse sans discernment.' Mémoires historiques, Œuvres (ed. 1806), ii. p. 336.
[5] 'Je me propose pour principal modèle de ma conduite et de mes actions celle de ce grand prince.' Lettre à L'Estrade, A. 1661. Œuv. (ed. 1806), V. p. 46.
[6] As S. Simon says (Mémoires, viii. 211): 'Ce cœur qui n'aima personne et qui fut aussi si peu aimé.'

courtiers, contemporary or not. Henry was a soldier among soldiers, brave, gay, dashing: Louis never shone in war, men even doubted his personal courage; it certainly never led him into rash adventures. In no branch of his life's work does he show one spark of originality; even Voltaire confesses that there was 'more uprightness and dignity than spring[1]' in him: he had no boldness and no enthusiasm: 'he made war without being a warrior, decreed many laws, but had not the slightest idea of legislation;' he busied himself with administration, but had no real organising gifts[2]. He had that sure mark which distinguishes the second-rate man from the great man: he loved details for their own sake, and shrank instinctively from all that was noble and strong. 'He soon came to suspect and then even to hate intelligence, nobility of sentiment, self-respect, a lofty spirit, a well-educated person: the older he grew the more confirmed was he in this aversion[3].'

His conscience was almost morbid, sure sign of a weakness of character: it showed itself in his anxiety to have a 'Council of Conscience' to decide on all questions of public casuistry; an institution to which we probably owe most of the dubious acts of his reign. It shows itself also in his great anxiety as to public opinion; he was singularly afraid of what men would say respecting his acts, and his reputation caused him daily uneasiness; it led him into a brilliant rather than a wise policy: it gives to his Memoirs a tone of petty vanity, which contrasts strikingly with the splendour of his career. No wonder flattery[4], especially the flattery of action[5], was dear to him: it was by understanding this characteristic of the King that Le Tellier held his place, and succeeded in making the fortune of his more famous son Louvois. Saint-Simon, in his sardonic

[1] 'Plus de justesse et de dignité que de saillie.'
[2] Considérations sur Louis XIV. Œuvres (ed. 1806), i. p. 182.
[3] Mémoires du Duc de Saint-Simon (ed. Hachette, 1872), viii. p. 77.
[4] 'Il aimoit les louanges,' says even Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV (ed. Louandre), p. 382.
[5] See the anecdote of La Feuillade in the Considérations sur Louis XIV, Œuvres (ed. 1806), i. pp. 205, 206, and Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV (ed. Louandre), p. 384, and note 1.

humour, does not hesitate to say that 'without the fear of the devil, which God left in him even in his worst times, he would have ordered men to worship him—and they would have done it[1].' No wonder that they said he went about as 'if he were worthy to be Emperor of all the earth,' and added that 'if the nations did but know him, they would be enamoured of his incomparable worth, and submit to the gentlest and best-regulated empire in the world[2].' He is like his own Versailles, that 'favourite without merit,' as it was wittily called; grand, sumptuous, splendid, yet heavy and rather commonplace: nature is sternly subordinated to rule; art in its decadence has spent on it the treasures of a nation; it is grand, but stupid.

Such then was Louis XIV when he began to reign indeed. His first step, after laying down the principles on which he meant to govern, was to divide the administration, and place it in the hands of three 'agents,' 'not that they should govern, but should serve the King[3].' Lionne[4], who had learnt diplomacy under his uncle Servien, 'the exterminating angel[5]' of the Peace of Westphalia, had, very rightly, the charge of Foreign Affairs: Le Tellier[6], another of Mazarin's protégés, a severe and fanatical official, good at putting down civil troubles, and afterwards a chief agent in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was named Secretary of War; though he was not thought strong enough for the place, he had at his right hand his able and dangerous son, the harsh Louvois: Fouquet, a man of civic origin who pretended to be noble, an ambitious Breton, the brilliant friend of all men of letters, dishonest, extravagant, immoral, and cultivated, was allowed to continue in his place as Intendant of finance. Behind, and out of sight

[1] Mémoires du Duc de Saint-Simon (ed. Hachette, 1872), viii. p. 89.
[2] Portraits de la Cour, in Cimber et Danjou, Archives Curieuses, II viii. pp. 373. 374.
[3] Madame de Motteville (Michaud, II, x. p. 502).
[4] A Dauphiny gentleman, born 1611.
[5] As the nuncio Chigi called him.
[6] Of legal origin, born 1603.

the dying Cardinal had placed his trusty dependent Colbert, having warned the King that Fouquet was dangerous, and to be watched by the vigilant eye of the most keen-sighted and upright of servants. Louis knew that Fouquet was more than suspected of robbing the state, that his private affairs were in hopeless confusion, 'that he did not know to within a few millions of livres how much he owed'; he was aware that such a man might wish to be a Catiline, that he had great ambition, and aimed at the forbidden place of First Minister. Almost every one about the Court, men and women alike, were in his pay, or bound to him by literary and other sympathies; he was playing with the Jansenist movement, and encouraging the resistance of Cardinal Retz: Anne of Austria did not hesitate to say that 'though he was a great thief, Fouquet would end by being master of the others[1].' Still, the King, as he says in his Memoirs, could not do without him, and hoped that he might mend his ways; and moreover, there was Colbert in the background[2], with his little half-closed cunning eyes, his bushy black eyebrows, and reserved bearing, a confidential clerk rather than a minister. The Chancellor, Seguier, aged and trusted, retained the seals; there were no important changes; except that some great personages were excluded from the Council: such were Marshal Villeroy[3], who had been the young King's governor, and of whom Louis was thought to be very fond, and the Queen Mother herself, who loudly accused her son of ingratitude, and, sneering at his ambition and assumed incapacity, said that the lad 'wanted to play the capable man[4].'

This was a moment of absolute calm in Europe, and of exhaustion and weary stillness at home. The struggles against

[1] Mémoires de Madame de Motteville, p. 502.

[2] Mémoires de Louis XIV, Cimber et Danjou, Archives Curieuses, II. viii. pp. 342, 343.

[3] A little later he was called into the King's new 'Conseil royal.'

[4] Mémoires de Louis XIV, in Cimber and Danjou, Archives Curieuses, II. viii. p. 338, note, and Choisy, Mémoires (Petitot II. lxiii. p. 222): 'Je m'en doutois bien qu'il seroit ingrat, et voudroit *faire le capable*.'

monarchy seemed to be over. Abroad, royalty had recovered its place: England was mad with joy at the Restoration; in the north of Europe Frederick III had just established an absolute throne at Copenhagen[1]; though the death of Charles Gustavus had arrested for a moment the same movement in Sweden, his son eventually carried out his plans; Holland was in the hands of the Burgher or Louwenstein party, headed by the De Witts, which was also the French party. Even in 1661 Louis shews an instinctive aversion for the young William Prince of Orange, now but eleven years old: he suspects Charles II of a design to overthrow the Burghers and to restore the Land-party with the little 'Lord of Breda' at its head[2]: the new peace with Spain had not included Portugal, and the two Peninsular powers were occupied with their home-troubles; the Empire was under a prince, Leopold I, whose hands were tied by the threatening movements of the Turks and the Hungarians, and, still more, by the state of Germany and the hostile attitude of the League of the Rhine[3]. No power was dangerous to France; Europe was moving along the very lines which had been clearly marked out by Richelieu and Mazarin as the direction of the true interest of their country.

At home there were a few causes for anxiety, in the attitude of the Church, the spread of Jansenism, the ambitions of the exiled Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal De Retz: to him and to the Jansenist movement Louis showed implacable hostility; his instincts saw in their dreams of a national Church, Catholic but free from Ultramontane power, not a strong bulwark of his throne, but an aristocratic organisation, which would surely

[1] By the Act of Sovereignty, 1660.

[2] Lettres de Louis XIV, Œuvres (ed. 1806), v. p. 31, in a letter to D'Estrades his ambassador in England.

[3] See above, p. 134. This League, formed by Mazarin in 1658 (for this very purpose, to secure French interests, an entrance into the heart of Germany, and a flank attack, if need were, on Holland), was composed of the three ecclesiastical Electors and the Bishop of Münster, the Duke of Neuburg, the King of Sweden (for Bremen and Verden), the Duke of Brunswick, and the Landgrave of Hesse. It was therefore a Low German and anti-imperial Union.

before long come into collision with his authority. France and her monarch had resolutely turned their back on all forms of constitutional life; it is clear that a strong national Church would not be allowed to exist.

Ignorant as he was, and not at all cruel by nature, Louis from the beginning dealt harshly with both Jansenists and Huguenots: their independent temper was hateful to him; he calls the former a 'spirit of innovation[1];' the latter were at once sharply taught that the Edict of Nantes was to be interpreted by the strictest letter of the law[2]. The King is also deeply concerned for the poor Catholics of Dunkirk[3], exposed to sore temptation; he sends them copious alms, 'for fear lest their misery should tempt them to follow the religion of the English,' as he styles it. It is curious to read in his letters how on another side he pleads for 'liberty of conscience' for the Catholics in Denmark and at Hamburg[4], and to remember what he thought of that same freedom a little later within his own realm.

Generally however France was as tranquil at home as in her distressed and impoverished state she could be: and it only needed a wise and prudent King, of simple habits and some true patriotism, to raise her to a state of well-being and prosperity which would have given her a permanent and splendid influence over the fortunes of the world. But Louis was altogether the wrong type of ruler for her: he neglected her best interests for the sake of startling and theatrical strokes; his ambition for his country was only a love of personal reputation and glory: he made France terrible and brilliant, so that all Europe watched and dreaded her as a consuming fire; and the end could not fail to be the exhaustion of her powers in struggles with the

[1] Mémoires de Louis XIV, Cimber et Danjou, II. viii. p. 364.
[2] Ibid. p 363.
[3] Dunkirk remained in English hands till Charles II sold it privately to Louis in 1662.
[4] Lettres de Louis XIV, Œuvres (ed. 1806), v. pp. 41-43, in letters to the King of Denmark and the Senate of Hamburg, both of this year, 1661. 'De leur accorder dans vos états liberté de conscience.'

nations around, and at the last, an utter collapse in the reeking ashes of the reign of Louis XV.

The new order of things had gone on but a few months, when society was startled by tidings of the fall of the most prominent of the King's three agents, Nicolas Fouquet. Louis, aware of the state of the finances, and of the Intendant's dishonesty, had given him warning, by ordering him to send in balance-sheets from time to time. These documents were examined and analysed by Colbert, who pointed out to the King the systematic false entries, which, by diminishing the receipts and exaggerating the outgoings, enabled Fouquet to appropriate large sums of money. All this time, too, the ambitious Intendant was aiming at the seals, hoping to persuade the young King to dismiss the aged and upright Seguier, plying him with pleasures, fêtes, distractions, offering even to interfere in the royal love-affairs, until at last his assiduities annoyed Louis so much that he could bear it no longer, and set himself to get rid of Fouquet, as a dangerous and dishonest servant. It shows us one side of the King's character, his placid temper, bearing with no small provocation:—they used to say of him, that he reproved a man for his first offence, said nothing as to the second, and on the third mercilessly dismissed the culprit from his service. In this case there was a special reason for long-suffering: Louis was not quite master of the position; and perhaps exaggerated the power and influence of Fouquet, thinking him more formidable than he really was. At any rate, he plotted against the finance-minister with the secrecy and caution of a dark conspirator[1]. He lavished attentions on him, appeared to enjoy the sumptuous fête prepared for him at Vaux, Fouquet's splendid seat, listened to his requests as to the seals, and seemed at least to give a favourable reply. For when Fouquet again begged for them, the King made one of the few jokes recorded of him,—and it is but a poor and heartless one,—for he told Fouquet to make himself happy, as he would certainly find the

[1] See the King's curious letter, with many details, addressed to the Queen Mother, 5 Sept. 1661. Œuvres (ed. 1806), v. p. 50.

seals in his house when he returned to Paris[1]:—and so he did; for after his arrest he found that the King's officers had placed seals on all his doors and cabinets, according to the custom with state-prisoners; and those were the only seals he got. Fouquet had followed his master into Brittany, his own country; at Nantes he was warned so clearly as to his coming ruin that he thought of escaping to Belle-Isle, his estate, an island lying off the Breton coast: while he hesitated, the King struck the blow. He was arrested and shut up at Angers. Great was the amazement in Paris, at the Court, in the literary world, among the fine ladies with whom he was so great a favourite! So many were compromised in his papers, that no one felt safe; even Lionne thought that his own fall must follow. But no disturbance ensued: the people warmly applauded the King; the minister's trial, which followed in due course, excited immense interest; we can see in Madame de Sévigné's letters[2] how the polite world of the day took part with the fallen minister; they had admired and basked in his splendour, had tasted of his liberality, and were not squeamish over his vices. So fell Nicolas Fouquet, whose cognisance, the squirrel, with the motto 'Quo non ascendam,' seemed to have led him up to such giddy heights, only to plunge him to irremediable ruin. His life was spared, and the Commission which tried him only condemned him to exile. But to allow one who knew so many secrets of state and had such powerful friends to go into banishment whither he would, was not what the King intended: he showed great annoyance, and even said to his mistress, Mademoiselle de la Vallière, that 'had the Court condemned him to death he would have signed the warrant.' As it was, he took on himself to reverse the noblest of all attributes of royalty; and instead of showing mercy, increased the severity of the sentence, by ordering Fouquet to be imprisoned at Pinerolo, a far harder lot than free exile. There the wretched,

[1] Les Portraits de la Cour, in Cimber et Danjou, II. viii. p. 409.
[2] Lettres de Mad. de Sévigne (Hachette's Grands Écrivains de la France, Nos. 54, 56-66).

pleasure-loving man wore away the monotonous remnant of his weary life: there he died after nineteen years of captivity: it has even been thought by some that he was the Man in the Iron Mask, and that the report of his death in 1680 was false.

No two men could be more unlike than this gay brilliant Fouquet, cultivated and dissolute, clever, careless, and a thief, and the grave business-like Colbert, the man after the King's heart, rigid and unsocial, simple of habits, a burgher with no apparent ambition or wish to rise; a man scrupulously honest and exact. He is said to have been of Scottish origin and a protestant, his ancestors, clothweavers, having emigrated to Rheims; and the tone of his character fits well with the belief. Him Louis at once named Comptroller-general of Finance, and under his fostering care order and plenty reappeared in France. With him there was no day without its line; no year without some new institution, some fresh manufacture, some as yet untried industry: he established the Academy of Inscriptions in 1663, that of the Sciences in 1666, of Architecture in 1671; he took charge of the rewards and pensions to be granted to men of letters: it was his, quite against all more modern ideas of wise administration, to foster and subsidise production, literary or artistic, commercial or agricultural. France, which had never, even in Sully's days, seen so much care expended on her, smiled, and gratefully repaid his labours with abundant fruitfulness. His care, however mistaken in principle, was far better than the civil wars, the precarious feverish life, the ruinous regulations and crushing taxation of former days.

These years, down to the Devolution War, are among the most prosperous and happy that France has ever seen. The pride of the country in its young ruler was gratified by his haughty bearing towards the powers of Europe: his ambassador in London, D'Estrades, after a bloody fracas in the streets, succeeded in taking precedence of the Spanish envoy: even at Rome he wrung an admission of wrong-doing from the Papacy

itself; Chigi the Legate was sent to Paris to excuse the violence of the Papal officers. In these diplomatic triumphs the King satisfied his 'ardent wish to appear and show his power'[1], and to make men talk of him. Restless and eager to shine in the European arena, he broke with the old and well-known policy of France, by sending troops (in 1664) to succour the Emperor Leopold against the Turks; they contributed largely to the great victory of the Christians on the Raab; his fleets scoured the Mediterranean and checked the African pirates.

At home Louis professed to feel much for the burdens of his people. In describing the state of France in 1661[2] he had drawn all in the darkest colours, artist-like, that the deepest gloom might come just before the effulgent rising of the Sun-god. The sterile few were wealthy, the working many penniless: the peasantry in most miserable state, the cattle had disappeared from the fields, and cultivation languished; consequently the people were poor and corn was dear; the country ever on the verge of famine, with dangerous fluctuations of prices, and the fatal engine of prohibited exports in full play: taxation pressed very unequally and heavily, vexatious import duties on raw materials strangled manufactures; 'disorder reigned.' But now, happily rid of Fouquet, the King set himself to remedy matters, and did not spare himself: in one of his letters he records, with a kind of exultation, his growing intelligence in financial questions, and his new passion for that branch of his task. He established a new Royal Council, composed of Villeroi, Colbert, and two others; with them he 'laboured continually from that time in unravelling the terrible confusion in which Fouquet had entangled his affairs[3].'

Here Colbert was the inspiring mind: though the King worked, and thought he understood all and did all, the systematic and organising genius of the new Intendant was the one guide, bringing order out of confusion, and speedily changing a deficit into a

[1] Considérations sur Louis XIV, Œuvres (ed. 1806), i. p. 118.
[2] Mémoires historiques, Œuvres (ed. 1806), pp. 9, sqq.
[3] Ib. i. p. 108.

large surplus. When he began in 1661 the receipts were put at over eighty-four millions of livres, of which less than thirty-two millions reached the treasury, so great was the waste caused by the existing system; while the expenditure, little curbed or understood, had risen to fifty-four, leaving a frightful yearly deficit of nearly twenty-two millions: in 1667, just before the Devolution War actually began, the receipts at the treasury had risen to sixty-three millions, while the outgoings had fallen to thirty two and a half, leaving an enormous surplus, a great weapon of power for the King's ambitious hand. To arrive at this happy result, Colbert had arbitrarily fixed the rate of interest on loans at a maximum of the 'denier vingt,' the twentieth penny, or five per centum, while he persuaded Louis to abolish a vast army of needless officers and to sweep away the whole system of finance farming. One consequence was that while the burden of taxation on the people was at once relieved, more money than ever flowed into the royal treasury. But mere reorganisation of finance was not enough: Colbert was determined to augment the sources of national wealth. He therefore hastened on the making of good highways; projected the great Languedoc Canal; declared Dunkirk and Marseilles free ports; and set himself to nurse the puny industries of the country; his 'royal manufactures' centralised and directed labour; though unfavourable, and even ruinous to private enterprise, in the main they developed some power of work in the nation. The final result, however, was that France has ever since leant on Government support instead of on the spontaneous energies of the people. Each year from 1663 to 1672 was marked by the establishment of some new manufacture[1]. Tapestries, carpets, silks, mosaics, inlaid cabinet and artistic work, lace, gold and silver cloth, pottery, steel, and so on,—these were the objects to which the attention of France was called. All these are the industries of luxury, bolstered up by monopolies and bounties and false demand. The King,

[1] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV (ed. Louandre), p. 391.

spent yearly about eight hundred thousand livres on these 'articles of taste.' They gave the industry of the French nation a distinct bias and a special excellence; they were perhaps not altogether ill-chosen for the time, and in a time of absolute stagnation any movement is good. But the whole system was flagrantly opposed to all good economic principles, and could never permanently increase the wealth of France. Meanwhile it largely contributed to her splendour and reputation.

Commerce was not neglected: four companies were set afoot: a privileged East India Company sprang into being in 1664, and a West India Company almost at the same moment. These great associations, in spite of the immense help given them by Government, never really flourished. Nor did Colbert care much for the true fountain of the wealth of France, her teeming soil: he did little for agriculture, where sagacious laws and well-applied help might have worked miracles: agricultural prosperity and prices were sacrificed to the interests of manufactures, as those interests were then wrongly understood.

The same spirit of protection was directed towards letters also;—letters which, even more than commerce or manufactures, suffer from the baneful influences of patronage. In the previous period the greatest men in the literary annals of France had been in opposition, some even in voluntary banishment: now however official help was provided; and we can see the effects of it in that gradual dying down of the fires of genius, which goes on as the long reign continues. At the outset the splendid creations of Corneille were still shining on the stage[1], and the greatest comedian and satirist of that or of any age, Molière, had already written some of his finest works[2]: Racine was just

[1] Corneille produced his finest works in Richelieu's time, but his *Otho* (1664) and *Agésilas* (1666) and some other pieces belong to the time of which we are now speaking.

[2] *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (1659), followed by a troop of others. The *Tartuffe* appeared in 1667.

beginning to feel his wings [1], and had not yet fallen under those influences which created the second or theological epoch of his writings. Boileau's satires had already appeared: he was not yet made Historiographer to the King.

With these, and a crowd of lesser writers, this splendid period of the reign was illustrated and ennobled: the King could not but wish to take in hand so important a branch of his 'métier du roy' as the direction and management of literature. We have his list of Pensions, drawn up in 1663, containing not merely the sums granted in each case, but the grounds on which the amount has been allotted: the list is therefore a proof of the value attached to the authors of the day: nothing could possibly show so clearly the dangers of a splendid patronage. The largest pensions go to the King's historians, Mezerai and Godefroi: for above all it was needful to secure the judgment of posterity. Then follows as next in importance, as if to cover the whole with ridicule, the name of Chapelain, the third-rate author whom Colbert employed to make out the list, with the singular notice, that he is 'the greatest French poet that hath ever been, and of the soundest judgment.' When we add that Molière and Racine come near the bottom of the list, and that Boileau does not appear at all, we get a fair idea of the value of this first systematic attempt at patronage [2].

In other ways the King and his minister were not idle: now began that taste for sumptuous buildings, which marks the age: palaces are adorned or built on every side, and at a ruinous cost; the Louvre, S. Germain, Versailles, the Trianon, all bear witness to this characteristic. Perrault was the chief architect, and Bernini was brought from Rome to help: their works have little nobility of style, and are full of affectations; it was art in the splendour of decadence.

The army was reorganised by Le Tellier and his son Louvois: these were the days of Martinet, who has left his name as a

[1] *Andromaque* (1667) and the *Plaideurs* (1668).
[2] Œuvres de Louis XIV (ed. 1806), i. pp. 223–225.

bye-word; regimentals were introduced; the bayonet brought into general use; the artillery improved: disliking to have great officers round his throne, Louis now abolished the posts of Constable and Colonel-General of Infantry; commissions in the army became the refuge of the young noblesse. A reformation of the laws was also undertaken, under Seguier's eye: a civil code appeared in 1667; rivers and forests were next treated of; a commercial and a criminal code followed; the organising spirit seemed to have taken possession of all France. Yet the legislation of Louis XIV was as faulty as his financial economy; it aimed not at securing the true principles of liberty and justice, but at precision, public order, regularity, and certainty[1]. Here, too, as in the regulations for commerce and industry, France seemed to be thankful for any attention and care, even if applied on wrong principles: though it is quite clear that the false statesmanship which marked Colbert's rule had in the end disastrous effects on his country, and strangled her energies where it ought to have given them room to grow. It is a dangerous thing to be always teaching a nation how it must be administered and regulated.

Lastly, Louis was unwearied in his watchfulness, lest any one should become powerful in France, or have even the shadow of independence. The noblesse, grouped round his person, were taught to sell their independence for the pomps and fêtes of the Court: in these they wore away their wealth, and grew yearly less able to assert themselves; they crowded into the army, and accepted with humble thankfulness the royal bounty. The 'verifications' of the Parliament of Paris—a kind of modified opposition, something between a protest and a veto, were put an end to; the power of that body was reduced, its chiefs removed. The clergy were taught that they had a master, and were kept in great subjection. The hereditary independence of the official classes was weakened; and the powers of the governors of frontier-fortresses withdrawn; so that they could no longer levy taxes in their districts or keep up half-inde-

[1] Guizot, Civilisation en Europe, 14me leçon.

pendent forces. The large towns, Bordeaux and Marseilles, saw fortifications rise to curb their free spirit; all civic daring and turbulence was promptly checked; Montauban, Dieppe, La Rochelle, and certain Provençal cities felt the King's heavy hand. He acted on his principle that 'All authority must centre in the sovereign alone:' and that 'the least division of power is sure to cause terrible evils:' behaving as if the old days of the League were coming back: he seems, in these early years, to have had a nervous fear lest his country should break out against him.

These were also the days in which the Court attained a greater gaiety and brilliancy than ever before had been seen in France. The King's love of work in no way damped his love of pleasure. Never had there been such splendid fêtes, such beauty, such grace, such outward decorum; for as yet the vices of the age were kept in the background. Each night the Court stepped into some fairy-land; some new creation of fancy, some castle, or temple, or bower, arose as by magic; gardens bloomed and romantic cascades gave variety to the scene, where all but now had been prosaic fields or monotonous wood. Louis was the centre of all: mythological or classical shows displayed his fine figure and handsome face, as a hero or a god: he delighted to appear as an Apollo, God of the Sun, of culture, of the arts, dispensing vivifying smiles and warmth of life. The vaunting and menacing motto, 'Nec Pluribus Impar,' first appeared at a great carrousel at the Tuileries: in that devi̧ce the monarch-sun shines brightly on the earth, as if, like Alexander, he longed for other worlds that he might dazzle them with his light[1].

In the midst of these brilliant effects, France saw war break out between England and Holland (1664); and though the dominant party at Amsterdam, counting on the King's friendship, appealed to him for aid, he was for a time well-pleased to let the two queens of the sea weaken each other, while

[1] Louis took the sun as his device in 1656; the motto did not appear till 1662.

he nursed his fleet. It suited him to send much help, in flagrant violation of the Peace of the Pyrenees, to the Portuguese, in their struggle for independence: for while Portugal kept Spain busy, and England was wrestling with the Dutch, his hands were free for any contingency. He was, however, obliged to listen to his Dutch allies, and declared war against Charles II in 1665: he sent six thousand men to hold the warlike Bishop of Münster in check, and compelled him to make peace; his ships had some success at sea.

Greater things however impended: the King of Spain, Philip IV, died in 1665, and Louis no longer cared to have an English war on his hands. Charles II, well as he liked the war to continue, 'for it helped him to money from his people[1],' could not hold out against the shameful disasters that befell his arms, and was compelled in July 1667 to sign the Treaty of Breda. For some months before that time Louis had been intriguing privately with him, and deluding his allies the Dutch[2]: it is to this time that we may refer the beginnings of that system of duplicity which marks the relations of the two Kings. Political fair dealing was certainly no element of the kingcraft of Louis: his reflexions on the best way of eluding the Peace of the Pyrenees in the matter of the war between Spain and Portugal, showed that his moral standard in such matters was flexible and low.

With the death of Philip IV in 1665, the Spanish succession question at once became urgent: how long would the sickly miserable child, his only male heir, live? So frail a cockboat on the sea of life might founder in a moment, and then who should succeed? Charles II however lingered on, more dead than alive, to the very end of the century, though he might have died at any moment: with him Spain herself was slowly perishing, in a long agony of forty years: the population, which under the Arabs had been reckoned at twenty millions, and is

[1] Lionne, in Mignet's Négociations relative à la succession d'Espagne.
[2] See a letter of his to Lionne, dated 18 Apr. 1667. Œuvres (ed. 1806), v. p. 405.

about fourteen at the present day, fell to six millions during this dreary reign. This was 'the pivot on which turned almost all the policy of Louis XIV; it occupied the diplomatists and the arms of France for fifty years and more; it formed the grandeur of the earlier days of his reign, and caused the misery of its end[1].' To this the King's attention was always turned: wars or treaties were alike regarded as subservient to this: the signature, for example, of the Treaty of Ryswick, which Voltaire attributes to the magnanimity of Louis, and to his pity for the wretched state of France, is now known to have been influenced solely by his anxieties over the Spanish question[2]: and the Peace of Breda was really dictated by the same needs.

The marriage of Louis XIV in 1660 to the Infanta of Spain had been accompanied by a formal and solemn renunciation of all her rights to the Spanish throne[3]; for in Spain there was no 'Salic Law' and if the little Charles died, she would be the rightful heir to the crown. Louis XIV agreed to the renunciation and signed the document, never intending to fulfil it or to keep his word. Mazarin said as much, and looked forward to the inevitable union of the two crowns. No sooner was Louis free to act, than he began his endeavours to shake himself free from his obligation: the Queen's dowry had never been paid by Spain; and this was at once made a pretext for its repudiation. The correspondence on the subject leaves no room for doubt, and shows us what were the King's claims. There are few documents extant so cynical as the despatch of Louis' agent, the Archbishop of Embrun[4], in which he describes the feelings with which he celebrated Mass at Madrid; 'Yesterday,' he says, 'I was obliged to

[1] Mignet, Négociations relative à la Succession d'Espagne, i. p. lii. Cp. Bolingbroke, Letters, No. vii. (pp. 69, 70).

[2] This is shown in the Correspondence inédite du Marquis de Harcourt, edited by Hippeau.

[3] Anne of Austria, when she married Louis XIII, had similarly renounced her rights.

[4] Dated 26 Oct. 1661; Mignet, Négociations, i. p. 79.

celebrate . . . and made the usual public prayers for the King, for the health of the Prince, and all the royal family,' and then he adds the remark, so cold, and, considering the moment, so ghastly, 'not forgetting all the while to pray secretly, as I am bound, for the prosperity of your Majesty, and hoping for the moment' (that is, after the death of all those for whose health he had but just been praying openly), 'when it may be permitted me to pray here for your Majesty aloud.' The King's claims are also clearly set forth in a letter addressed to the same Archbishop four months later,—he will not help the Portuguese, or ask for more from Spain, if 'only she will cede him at once in full possession and sovereignty Franche-Comté, Luxemburg, Hainault, and the towns of Cambrai, Aire, and Saint-Omer[1].'

In truth he had aimed at more than this: if Philip IV and his puny son both died, he hoped for the whole heritage in spite of the renunciations; if Charles II succeeded to the throne, he would still have a part, and that part the Spanish Netherlands. And this was what had now happened: Philip was dead; Charles II succeeding him. At once Louis put in his claim for the Netherlands, basing it on the ancient feudal law of Devolution. A great outburst of diplomatic work followed: Lionne's voice was heard at every court; that minister, whom some have called with a certain truth the greatest of the ministers of Louis, bent all his energies to secure a part, if not the whole of the Spanish possessions for France. A paper war ensued, which was opened by a 'Treatise of the rights of the Queen[2],' a vigorous party-statement of the grounds on which the whole political fabric of the reign was to be built up. It was as vigorously answered from the other side, which indeed had the best of this war of words.

Louis claimed two things, for both of which the cancelling of the Queen's renunciation was necessary; though the two claims

[1] Mignet, Négociations, i. p. 109.

[2] 'Traité des droits de la Reine Tres-Chrétienne sur divers états de la monarchie d'Espagne.' Said to have been written by Duhan.

rested eventually on quite different grounds. The larger claim was for the succession to the whole Spanish dominion, which every one in Europe believed must very shortly become vacant. This however was not the question of the moment: the death of Philip IV had handed Spain and her great territories over to the weakly child Charles II, whose much-expected death was deferred for five and thirty years. The other question, on the other hand, was raised at once. Some one[1] had bethought himself of certain feudal customs applicable to the Netherland provinces, in accordance with which the succession to them under their usual counts and lords had formerly been regulated. These customs were, for Brabant, Antwerp, Malines, Limburg, Upper Gelderland, Namur, Aire and Saint-Omer in Artois[2], and Cambrai, what is called 'the Jus Devolutionis'; that is, these districts went to the children, male or female, of 'the first bed' to the exclusion of those of the second. Hainault was similarly claimed for the first family, on the ground of its special custom: it was held that feudally Franche-Comté ought to be divided into equal parts among all the children; and as there were three, the Queen of France claimed one-third: the Luxemburg custom differed again, in giving two shares to a son, and otherwise dividing the territory among the children; of Luxemburg, therefore, the Queen claimed a quarter, leaving two shares for her brother, and one for her sister[3]. Now[4] (as Maria Theresa, the Queen of France, was the daughter of the first wife of Philip IV, Elizabeth of France, while the other children, Margaret Theresa and Charles II, sprang from his second wife, Maria Anna of Austria) the King of France, transferring customs of feudal lordship to the succession of royalty, declared that he would take possession of these districts in his wife's name. He did not forget, at the same time, to

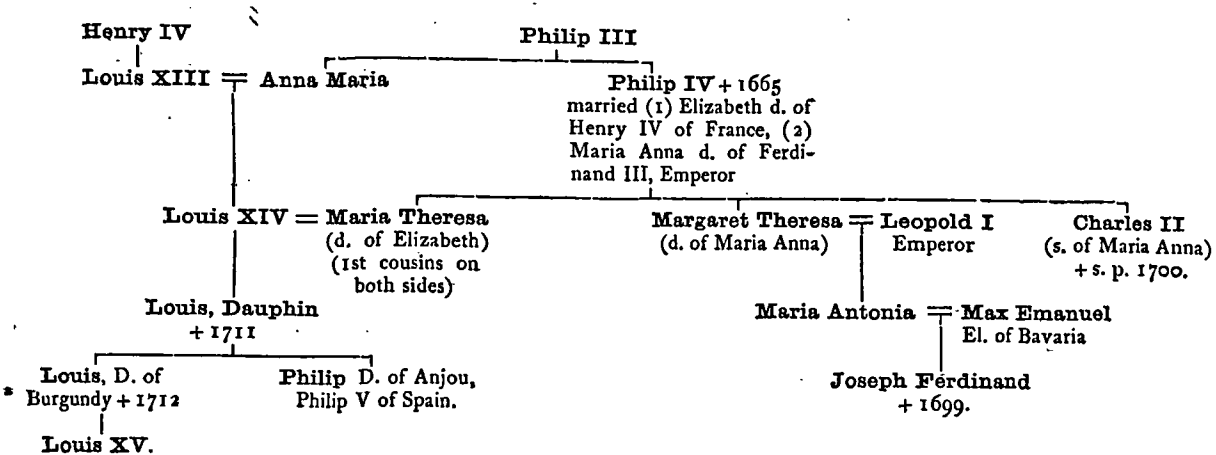
[1] It is said to have been Turenne's secretary, Duhan; if so, it is a sign that the counsels of the Marshal had much to do with the King's aggressive policy.

[2] Which were still in Spanish hands.

[3] See Martin, Histoire de France, xiii. p. 315.

[4] See Table over page.

TABLE II. THE SPANISH AND FRENCH RELATIONSHIP.


Henry IV
Louis XIII = Anna Maria
Philip III
Philip IV + 1665
married (1) Elizabeth d. of Henry IV of France, (2) Maria Anna d. of Ferdinand III, Emperor
Louis XIV = Maria Theresa
(d. of Elizabeth)
(1st cousins on both sides)
Margaret Theresa = Leopold I
(d. of Maria Anna)
Emperor
Charles II
(s. of Maria Anna)
+ s. p. 1700.
Louis, Dauphin
+ 1711
Maria Antonia = Max Emanuel
El. of Bavaria
Louis, D. of Burgundy + 1712
Philip D. of Anjou, Philip V of Spain.
Joseph Ferdinand
+ 1699.
Louis XV.

flourish before the eyes of Europe the favourite thesis of French monarchs,—that he was the descendant and heir of Frankish kings, and notably of Karl the Great: 'the kings of France were their natural lords before kings of Castile even existed at all[1].' In notifying his action in the matter, Louis ostentatiously avoided all phrases which might be interpreted as meaning war; he spoke only of his 'journey' into the Spanish Netherlands, and assumed that Europe understood him to be acting as rightful and unopposed sovereign of those parts.

Then he went to Amiens (May, 1667), where the main part of his army was to assemble: its left-hand corps under d'Aumont was ordered to operate along the sea-coast; the central body, commanded by the King himself with his friend and counsellor Turenne, was to start from Amiens, and aimed first at Brussels; a third force under Duras, was collected at La Fère; and, still farther to the east, a fourth army under Créqui threatened Luxemburg. Condé, now governor of Burgundy, was presently to attack Franche-Comté.

The Devolution war, which now begins, may be summed up in a few words. There were two campaigns, the first in the Netherlands in 1667; the second in Franche-Comté in 1668. Not a single encounter deserving to be called a battle took place in either campaign of the war: the sieges, its chief characteristics, were short and easy: it came to a close when most persons thought it was just about to enter on a fresh and more serious phase.

Everything was favourable to France. The Spaniards could not easily get at their Netherland possessions, and had neither strength nor vigour at home: the fortified towns were ill-defended, if defended at all: from many of them, strong places enough, the garrisons were withdrawn, because they were too feeble to be left in danger: the population disliked the Spanish rule, and welcomed the French as deliverers. At first the young men of the army, including the King himself, clamoured for an immediate advance on Brussels; but the caution and

[1] Traité des droits de la Reine.

experience of Turenne obliged them to make the nearer districts safe. So the campaign of 1667 was simply a march from place to place, and the capture of town after town.

First Charleroi, which the Spaniards had abandoned, was seized: then, not Brussels, but Tournai fell; then Douai, Oudenarde, and Alost; Dendermonde, which made some resistance, was missed: the King shows himself[1] very sensitive over this little check. He passed on at once to attack Lille, which fell without any serious struggle, and the campaign was concluded by a brilliant exploit, in which Créqui and Bellefonds surprised the Spaniards, who had advanced to succour Lille: they, believing the whole French army to be on them, made little resistance, and fled with a loss, in killed, prisoners, and runaways, of perhaps a couple of thousand men. This ended the campaign: the rest of the year was spent on plans for 1668. There should be an army to penetrate into Catalonia; another under Condé to observe the Rhine; while the third and fourth armies were to operate in Flanders, under the King and Turenne.

Busy negotiations, of great importance, also went on: Lionne excited troubles in Poland, to keep Germany employed: Louis allied himself closely with Charles II of England, whose price he had now learnt: above all, he sketched out a Partition Treaty with the Emperor Leopold[2]—a negociation carried on with such caution on both sides, that it remained an absolute secret for a century. It was, in fact, the hidden pivot on which the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle turned.

The one remarkable feat of the war was yet to be done; and that was the campaign of February 1668. Through the latter months of 1667 Condé had skilfully made his preparations. Franche-Comté was almost entirely surrounded by French territory, except at its north-eastern corner where it touches on the Bishopric of Basel. It had been left to itself; hardly any Spanish troops were in it; the fortified places were old-fashioned

[1] Mémoires historiques, Œuvres (ed. 1806), ii. pp. 307–311.
[2] Ibid. pp. 371, 372. It was signed 19 Jan. 1668.

and had fallen into neglect; and the only defender the County could have was Switzerland; for the Cantons considered it, just as the Dutch regarded the Spanish Netherlands, a barrier between them and the powerful monarchy beyond. Condé's measures were so well taken, and his action so swift, that the Swiss had not time to gather themselves together; almost before they heard of the invasion, the whole campaign was over. On the 3rd of February Condé had crossed the frontier: the King hastened from Paris, and arrived in time to receive the oaths and submission of the chief places. In little more than a fortnight the whole province was secured; Dôle and Besançon were taken, all the lesser places threw open their gates. Louis gave to Condé the well-merited post of Governor of the two Burgundies, and returned in triumph to Paris.

There he learnt that a new grouping of the Powers of Europe was beginning;—a 'plot[1]' he loftily calls it, as if all resistance to France were treason. Under the skilful management of Sir William Temple an agreement had been come to between England and Holland: even John de Witt himself no longer held to the French alliance, and the two sea-powers at last seemed to lay aside their ancient rivalry. Count Dohna, for Sweden, joined the league in the following May; these three powers made up the famous Triple Alliance of 1668. Spain and Portugal had also made peace (Feb. 1668). Thus the three chief Protestant powers, England, Holland, and Sweden, were now leagued—strange change for Europe!—to save the tottering Spanish monarchy.

The young Court round the King, and most of the officers of the army, were naturally eager that, after the brilliant stroke of Franche-Comté, France should seek new triumphs and dictate peace on her own terms at Brussels. The King however knew more than they knew; Turenne himself was not eager for war, and had already recommended negociation; the agreement with

[1] Mémoires hist. Œuvres, ii. p. 361. Voltaire, following cue, is pleased to call this resistance to Louis an 'intrigue.' Siécle, p. 99 (ed. Louandre).

Leopold was conclusive, and peace was speedily made. The King's caution and timidity may have had some share in it; but the chief motive to peace was the knowledge that all had already been secured that could have been hoped for. Add to this the keen pleasure Louis felt in being able to pose himself before Europe as the most magnanimous and moderate of conquerors. So the negociation speedily ended in the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (2 May, 1668), by which Louis withdrew from Franche-Comté, contenting himself with dismantling its strong places, and securing the districts overrun and towns taken in the Netherlands. He kept all he had won on the Lys, the Scheldt, and the Sambre[1].

It is usual to say that Louis consented to peace through alarm at the Triple Alliance: that was not really a very serious danger. Charles II of England was his friend, and he feared nothing from that side: in Holland a great party was devoted to his interests: Sweden was his old ally. Though he no doubt wished for peace, that he might break up these new friendships, the true cause of peace was his knowledge that the Spanish succession was really arranged and that Charles II of Spain might die at any hour. Also, as he himself says more than once[2], what was conceded to him in the Netherlands carried with it, by implication, the abolition of the Queen's renunciation; and so far cleared the way for the eventual succession. In addition to this, again, it is probable that Louis was not anxious to add to the laurels won by Condé, or to seem, as in war he was but too likely to seem, a less brilliant personage than his subject; perhaps also some such feeling reconciled him to giving up Franche-Comté; it was as if he did not think so very much of that conquest; and as if he was rather glad that the Great Condé's government should not be really extended over both Burgundies.

Thus under the useful garb of moderation did ambition, and

[1] Bolingbroke calls the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle 'nothing more than a composition between the bully and the bullied.' Letter vii. p. 74.

[2] Mémoires historiques; Œuvres, ii, pp. 366-369.

that of no measured kind, veil itself, till the time for its fulfilment should be come. 'Beyond the recognised reasons for peace,' says Louis, 'there were others which depended solely from the secret views I at that time entertained[1].' The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was but an apparent retreat, in order that the King might presently make the bolder leap.

[1] Mémoires historiques; Œuvres, ii. p. 369.

CHAPTER II.

FROM AIX-LA-CHAPELLE TO NIMWEGEN; THE DUTCH WAR. A.D. 1668–1678.

THE Triple Alliance, though often rated too highly, especially by English writers, was still an important point in European history[1]. The three powers, acting as armed mediators, pressed peace on Louis at S. Germain, while the congress at Aix-la-Chapelle did little more than nominally discuss the terms. The mediating powers accepted the past, and allowed France to carry off the chief spoils of her campaigns, hoping to curb and limit the ambition of Louis for the future. He, knowing how he stood, accepted all they gave, and laughed at them in his sleeve; —how could they tie him down for the future, when he had his partition-treaty with the Emperor already in his pocket? So he made peace; and set himself at once to dissolve the Alliance, which seemed so menacing.

With England he knew that he would have little trouble: all the while, whatever public opinion or Parliament might think, he was sure of Charles II and the 'Cabal'; and that was enough for him. Sweden had acceded to the alliance 'as a commercial speculation';—it would be quite easy to buy her off. With Holland however, the case was different; for twenty years past she had shown a distinct tendency towards opposition: no longer

[1] L. von Ranke, Französische Geschichte, iii. p. 238.

did the burgher party rule supreme, or lean implicitly on France. There runs through the letters of Louis XIV a distinct tone of dislike towards the Dutch: they were tradesmen—a 'nation of shopkeepers,' yet outspoken and independent; their opinions, religious and political, were unbearable: the republican boldness of Van Beuningen, burgomaster of Amsterdam, the ambassador of the Provinces at S. Germain, bitterly offended the King; he determined that he would crush the Republic, and extend his kingdom to the Rhine. There is no need of the well-known tale of the medal of Joshua[1] to account for the vehement and angry spirit in which Louis now began to deal with the Dutch. They were distasteful to him for many reasons; their great trade overshadowed all the attempts of France, under Colbert's fostering hand, to create commercial prosperity for herself; their constitution, whichever party might prevail, was republican; their manners were sturdy and offensive to a monarch who lived for glory and flattery; their religion was in his eyes rank blasphemy. Holland was the home of many a literary exile, the land of free writing and vigorous journalism, while France admired the polite classicalism of her brilliant, though, with exception of Molière, slightly wearisome stage. In a hundred ways the antagonism made itself felt; and the opposing elements during these years silently but surely gathered for an explosion. 'My fathers,' said Louis, 'built them up, but I will tear them down.'

In these words lies the reversal of the ancient policy of France, her well-known subordination of her religious opinions to her political needs. It was a fatal step, this attack on Holland: no longer did France care to hold the balance between the Confessions: on the contrary, while the Protestant

[1] There is a medal, probably struck in Germany, with Joshua staying the sun (in allusion to Louis' cognisance), and with the motto 'In conspectu meo stabat sol.' Van Beuningen declared solemnly that the tale that Joshua meant himself was 'une fiction toute pure inventée en France.' See Ranke, Franz. Gesch. iii. p. 285, and note. See also Martin, xiii. p. 344. Voltaire is wrong in saying (Siècle, ed. Louandre, p. 109), 'Cette médaille n'exista jamais.'

powers combined in 1668 to save Catholic Spain, the lesser German princes on the Rhine are now seen joining with Louis to crush Holland; and presently, we see the Great Alliance, in which the Emperor joins the Northern Princes and the Dutch in thrusting back the French domination. It has been truly said[1], that 'in Holland the old political system of France made shipwreck.'

If a man falls because he stands out against some dominant selfishness of his time, we honour him as a hero: but Louis overthrew the greatness of France because he abandoned her ancient principles, and made himself the exponent of her two worst passions—her passion for political and warlike triumphs, and her passion for uniformity. The old ideas of universal dominion, in politics and religion, reappear: Louis even negociates for the Imperial crown: he defers his dazzling Oriental schemes till things nearer home shall be settled in his favour.

That he seriously entertained such far-reaching plans sufficiently foreboded ill; but the dangers were much increased by the rise of two men, at this time coming more prominently forward. Of these two the one was Louvois, Le Tellier's son, who knew the fatal art of flattery but too well: 'the most brutal of all agents[2]' to the rest of the world, the most insidious incense-bearer to his master. He it is who a little after this time taught Louis to believe that his great glory was to stand 'alone against all': he pushed the King into the Dutch war, refused all terms, drove Holland to desperation, ruined the friendly party in the Commonwealth, and secured the rise of William of Orange. And William of Orange was the other man whose rise was fatal to Louis. The two Princes were the direct opposites of each other in every way. Louis was already well-accustomed to his throne when William was born, eight days after his father's death in 1650. The burgher-party, the

[1] By Mignet, in his admirable volumes on the Spanish Succession, Négociations, &c., I. pp. lxii, lxiii.

[2] Siri's remark, quoted in Mignet, I. lxii, note 1.

'rigid republicans,' as Voltaire styles them, had at that moment won the ascendancy over their antagonists; these were the aristocratic republicans, whose strength lay in the great towns of the Provinces, the Low German counterparts to the oligarchical Republic of Venice; they were the friends of France and hostile to their trading rival England. The rule of the States-General, with John de Witt, the Grand Pensionary, at their head, had taken the place of the rule of the Stattholders, an office hereditary in the family of William the Silent, the younger branch of the House of Orange-Nassau. The little babe of 1650 was the only head of the land-party, whom Voltaire calls the 'mitigated republicans'; it was a party far more democratic than the other, preferring before the narrow parliamentary government of the States-General the broader liberties to be enjoyed under a Prince or President of the House of Orange. This party disliked the French influences, and leant on England. To the friendly feeling of Charles II of England, to the marriage of William with the Princess Mary in 1677, and to the pressure exerted on the Dutch by the attacks of Louis XIV, are due in part the successful resistance to that imperious monarch, the English Revolution, and the establishment of the liberties of Europe in their modern form.

William of Orange 'was never a boy.' His childhood was passed in gloomy adversity: he grew up reserved, cautious, farseeing; his eyes, like those of the modern Australians of the bush, had the strained gaze of one who ever scans the perils and possibilities of a far-distant horizon. He was a faithful and tenacious friend, though cold and harsh of aspect and approach to the rest of the world: his larger views and masterful temper never allowed him, to his dying day, to be comfortable under the galling checks of parliamentary government in England: champion of freedom for the world, he scarcely could see that Parliament was an equally jealous defender of the liberties of his adopted country. He chafed under its restrictions, despised its fears, knowing himself to be true and honourable, and was amazed at its insular narrowness of view. Yet it was this stern

cold man, this 'magnanimous and unconquerable soul,' who was needed to redress the world's affairs. Through disappointment and defeat, with jealous States and suspicious Parliaments, with raw levies and scant supplies, William, out of his wonderful and heroic tenacity, gradually created such a resistance to the schemes of Louis as turned the whole current of the world's history. From the drowned marshes of the Batavian delta came forth that unextinguishable liberty which had so long defied the dominant Spanish power, and now taught Louis XIV the hollowness of his dreams of Empire.

Louis XIV set himself with all the determination of his character to isolate and then to crush the Dutch. 'All that the efforts of human ambition and prudence can prepare for the destruction of a nation he had done[1],' says Voltaire: and it should restore our belief in the prevailing power of justice to note that these great preparations ended, not in the overthrow of the little nation attacked, but in the weakening of France herself; they prepared the way for the calamities which mark the latter years of the great monarch's reign.

England had first to be secured: negociations were gladly listened to by Charles II; who, as he said, was 'as ready to smite the Dutch as Louis himself;' in 1670 Louis made a grand triumphal progress through his newly acquired frontier towns in the North, taking with him in one carriage the 'two Queens,' the true Queen, and Madame de Montespan.

This journey of almost Oriental splendour was really but the cloak for the mission to England of the clever and attractive Henrietta Maria, Duchess of Orleans. She crossed to England, and there meeting her brother Charles, as though it were but a friendly visit, concluded the secret treaty of Dover, in which the English king undertook to abandon Holland, and to declare himself, at the right moment, a Catholic. The price was a large sum of ready money, the promise of the islands which commanded the mouths of the Scheldt and Meuse, and a

[1] Siècle de Louis XIV (ed. Louandre), p. 109.

brilliant new mistress, Mademoiselle de Querouaille, 'that famous beauty, but, in my opinion, of a childish, simple, and baby face[1],' whom the king speedily made Duchess of Portsmouth. Her influence would be needed in the coming storms to keep Charles firmly attached to the French interests[2], opposed as they were to the religion and instincts of the English people. This treaty of Dover (22 May, 1670)[3], which could not be made known as it stood, for, as Charles said, 'he was the only man in England who approved of it,' was cloaked over with a public document, from which the first clause was omitted: the two kings laughed in their sleeves at Buckingham, who had been sent to negociate it, and who went through the farce in ignorant gravity and good faith.

The Duchess of Orleans[4], having done her task for Louis,

[1] Evelyn's Diary, 4 Nov. 1670.

[2] 'Elle ne contribua peu à la parfaite intelligence qui fut toujours entre les deux rois.' Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 290).

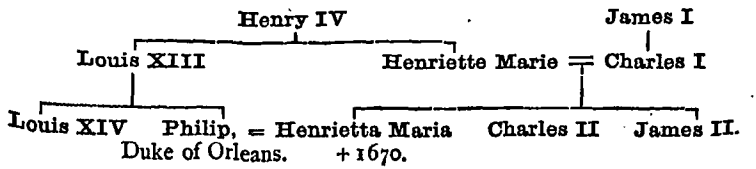
[3] Its chief conditions were :—

(1) Charles promises to declare himself Catholic as soon as it should be safe to do so.
(2) Louis promises help in cash and arms if rebellion followed.
(3) Louis will solemnly observe the terms of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.
(4) Charles agrees to help Louis by land and sea, to secure the Spanish succession.
(5) Both Kings will make war on the United Provinces, Louis by land, Charles by sea.
(6) Subsidy of three million livres yearly to Charles.
(7) At the Scheldt mouths, the Island of Walcheren, Sluys, and Cadsand, to be England's share of the spoils.
(8) A Treaty of Commerce to follow.

The Treaty is given in Lingard, History of England (ed. 1855), ix. p. 91.

TABLE III.

THE STUART AND BOURBON RELATIONSHIP.



returned, somewhat heavy of heart, to France; for she had hoped to escape from her wretched husband the Duke; that, however, could not be. She went first to St. Germain to the Court; thence her husband took her to Saint Cloud: there she was suddenly taken very ill, drank a glass of chicory-water, and was immediately seized with violent pains; she died in the night, not without very grave suspicions of poison. She believed it herself; the vehement quarrels and intrigues in which she was enveloped gave a sufficient cause; the age was full of the terrors of poison; her symptoms were alarming and sudden. Yet her health was bad; she was said to have been far gone in consumption; the medical opinion of the day declared itself against the suspicion. The despair of her friends at her sudden death was very striking; one of her ladies forthwith became a nun; the literary world was full of wailing: after the loss of her, says La Fare, 'the Court was nothing but gambling, confusion, and rudeness[1].' The King, fearful of the effect of the news on his fresh-made alliance, addressed a letter of condolence to Charles, in which he shows far more anxiety for the political consequences that may ensue than grief at her death[2]. She lives in the literature of the age; at her bidding Corneille and Racine had written each a Berenice, portraying her in ancient garb; her death was the text for one of Bossuet's most splendid funeral orations.

This was the tragic incident of the new Anglo-French alliance: elsewhere Louis had few difficulties to encounter. Sweden was easily detached from Holland: the Emperor consented to stand aside; the members of the old league of the Rhine were friendly; that disreputable Bishop of Münster, Van Galen, the Duke of Brunswick, the Elector of Cologne, all siding warmly with Louis; the Elector granted Neuss and Kaiserwerth as depôts for the French army of the Rhine:

[1] Mémoires (Michaud, III. viii. 269).
[2] Lettres particulières, 30 June, 1670. Œuvres (ed. 1806), v. p. 469.

the Elector Palatine, whose daughter now became the Duke of Orleans' second wife[1], was secured: Mainz, Trèves, and Bavaria stood neutral. Only the Great Elector refused, now as ever, to fall in with French ambition: the Protestant side was his, and he clung to it tenaciously, not without practical views as to the growth of Brandenburg in the direction of Jülich and of Pommern. The Duke of Lorraine showed signs of a wish to go with Holland; but Créqui marched at Louis' orders to Nancy, and the Duke fled to Germany: Lorraine and Bar were at once occupied by French troops. Spain also refused to side with France, and secretly made what arrangements she could to help the other side.

So were things drawing near a catastrophe; though here and there one tried to avert it. The King had shown a liking for Oriental matters, and seemed inclined to be the Crusading hero of modern times. Leibnitz, now just rising to the height of his great reputation, laid before him a scheme for the conquest of Egypt, the seizure by France of the whole Mediterranean trade, the overthrow of the unbeliever, and ejection of Islam from Europe. The learned world rose with enthusiasm at the thought that the land of Sophocles, the Holy Land of their classical fervour, might be rescued from barbarism; more glorious, more easy, more permanent, said they, would this great crusade be than the mere extermination of sulky tradesmen in Dutch swamps. Had Lionne lived, he might perhaps have swayed the balance in this direction: but unluckily for France that great statesman died in 1671, and Colbert was left without support. The evil star of the brutal Louvois[2] was now full in the ascendant; and he had set his mind on the Dutch War. Colbert was for no fighting at all, and did not encourage even the Eastern

[1] She has left brilliant, but not very trustworthy, memoirs. She is the mother of the modern Orleans branch of the Bourbons.

[2] Hear the Palatine Princess on him: 'Il était horriblement méchant ... il s'est fait haïr par tout le monde. Il croyait bien au diable, mais non pas au bon Dieu. Il croyait à tous les dévins; mais il ne faisait pas scrupule d'incendier, empoisonner, mentir, et tromper' (which reads like De Quincy's 'ending in downright incivility').

scheme; Louis himself listened more and more to his evil genius; and the Dutch War was finally determined on, though there was no pretext or excuse for it, as Voltaire himself says[1], comparing this mighty combination of power for the destruction of Holland with the League of sovereigns at Cambrai for the overthrow of Venice, 'because she was wealthy and proud'.

While all these matters were being arranged, France was in no happy humour at home: it was the age of astrologers and poisoners, if it was also the age of Bossuet and his conversion-triumphs[2]: a magician was sent to Charles II to advise and help him: in Paris a 'Chamber of Poisons' was set up, for these were the days of the Brinvilliers[3]; Louvois found the tribunal very handy as a private Vehmgericht, by the agency of which he rid himself of enemies, and satisfied his vengeance[4]. The death of the Duchess of Orleans struck terror into all hearts; every sudden illness was put down to poison; the narrowest religion, the grossest superstition, the most abject terrors, all flourished together.

We see from the letters of Louis how much he had at heart the extinction of Huguenot opinions: his plan was to wear them down, by sedulous conversions of some, purchase of others, by the gentle coercion a Court can exercise, by refusal of promotion or offices. These processes are to be noted in full action during these days: later on, when he is deluded into believing that only a scanty remnant of stiffnecked misbelievers remain, he will begin to persecute openly, and finally decide on the suicidal policy of driving them from France. Thus his conduct with respect to the Huguenots follows a definite and well-designed plan throughout: successful at first, it fails afterwards, because Louis miscalculated utterly the forces of resistance, and was indifferent as to the effects of their expulsion. The King in these days took many steps for the worse:

[1] Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 108.
[2] He converted Turenne in 1668.
[3] She fled from Paris in 1670.
[4] Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 291).

he knew nothing of the history of his country, was ignorant of even the names of great families; and now that the Duchess of Orleans was gone, there was no one to set him right: he began to make great blunders in dealing with the Court. Being moreover of a 'pedantic and austere humour', as La Fare says, he fell into obvious contradictions: he had mistresses, and moralised solemnly over the right behaviour towards them; he exacted the strictest external propriety, and added the sin of hypocrisy to the other vices he encouraged. His letters and writings of this time contain a strange mixture of religion and passion, of things sacred and trivial: these were the days in which he turned his back on sweet Mademoiselle de la Vallière, who humbly and thankfully glided off the great scene, retiring into the haven of a nunnery, and called to his side the haughty imperious Madame de Montespan. With these amusements, and his reckless passion for building, pulling down, and rebuilding, he filled up these years, in which, though 'there was peace, the people found no solace[1].' Louvois, too, was steadily rising all this while: he made the Dutch War of 1672 partly in order to depress his rival Colbert, who had to find the funds for it and for the King's pleasures. Colbert had a most ungrateful task, acquitted with his wonted probity, though he could not help showing an ill-humour and dissatisfaction which irritated and offended the King.

So war began. The English, who had charge of the naval operations, opened badly with an attack, without any declaration of war, on the Smyrna fleet: the attempt was in the main a failure, 'a breach of faith such as even Mahometans and pyrates would have been ashamed of,' 'as ridiculous as it was base,' says Bishop Burnet[2]: their fortunes in these years were not brilliant. For the land-war France had made immense preparations at huge cost: thirty ships of war were sent to join and to observe the English: the King marching northwards

[1] Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 265).
[2] Own Times, i. p. 307 (ed. 1724).

had at his back over a hundred and twenty thousand men: a considerable force of German auxiliaries in French pay mustered on the Rhine. The chief command under Louis was divided between the Great Condé and Turenne: Vauban was there to direct the siege-works so dear to the King, and to secure the places when taken; Louvois watched over everything; poor Colbert had to find the money. Sure of an easy and brilliant triumph, Louis carried in his train a sedulous historian, Péllisson, a convert both from Protestantism and from the old party of Fouquet, in whose fall he had shared. His it would be to chronicle the King's acts, and to display them to the gaze of posterity. The great work was never written; we possess nothing but some fragments of his 'History of Louis XIV down to the Peace of Nimwegen'. On the other hand, nothing could be more hopeless than the state of the United Provinces. For years the sea-party had ruled supreme: with help of Ruyter's genius, they might stay their enemies on the Channel; but what glimmer of hope was there for them by land? The party of William of Orange seemed only strong enough to divide the counsels of the Dutch; there was but a miserable army of some twenty-five thousand raw and untrained soldiers; the strong towns were neglected; if once Louis set foot in the Provinces there appeared to be nothing to arrest his progress: he would decree at Amsterdam the extinction of the Republic. And this, it seemed clear, was his intention: embassy after embassy had come with offers of concession on concession; the humblest proposals had been made to him; hastily and haughtily he had repulsed them all. He had taken up the sword, the sword should be thrown into the balance, come what might.

The King and Turenne commanded the chief army, sixty thousand strong; their gathering-place was Sedan: further on at Charleroi lay Condé with a vanguard of twenty-five thousand men: a division was pushed still farther forward and occupied the Bishoprick of Liège; all the Meuse, down to the key-fortress of Maestricht, was in French hands: another strong force under

Luxemburg was directed to join the Germans under the two warlike prelates of Cologne and Münster; to the King's left lay another division watching the Spaniards in Flanders.

As Louis did not wish to drive the Spaniards into war, and as, in fact, the nearest route was defended by strong fortresses and deep rivers, while the approach to Holland by the Meuse was commanded by Maestricht, he concerted with Turenne a plan for a great flank march by the Rhine. A considerable force was set to mask Maestricht; then, confident in his overwhelming numbers, and aware of the weakness of the Prince of Orange, Louis did not hesitate to follow Turenne's advice. On the Rhine all was friendly; the old historic barrier-town of Neuss was in his hands: his army descended both banks of the river. Meanwhile the States-General had ordered the young Prince of Orange to shelter his raw troops behind the Yssel, where the Dutch had a few ill-provided forts: they had not expected to be attacked from that side, and had put all their trust in Maestricht, and in the defences along that roadway into Holland.

Louis took them completely at unawares. He passed as a friend through Jülich into the territories of the Elector of Cologne: Condé on the right bank made front against any force the Great Elector might send, and joined the German allies who were under the Duke of Luxemburg and the Bishop of Münster. Meanwhile, the King's army, descending the left bank, took with ease the Dutch fortresses, then crossed the river at Wesel, and from the right shore threatened the line of the Yssel and the 'Betuwe,' the district between the Leck and Waal. By this move he escaped all the larger rivers lying between France and Holland: he was beyond the Meuse, the Waal, and, if he chose, the Leck: the only river of any size between him and Amsterdam was the Yssel. Turenne's plan was to take the Yssel line in the rear by crossing the Rhine into the Betuwe; then to cross again at Arnheim, in the rear of the Prince of Orange, cutting him off from Amsterdam, and so having that city completely at his mercy. Following this plan,

the head of the army, directly it reached the point opposite the Tollhus[1], began to construct a bridge. The Rhine in this part, between the outfall from it of the Waal above and of the Yssel below, is shallow and sluggish: there were only some twenty feet of deep water in mid-channel. The Prince of Orange, whom the Duke of Luxemburg occupied on the Yssel, could only send a weak force to defend the Rhine: the French cavalry seeing them appear, boldly crossed the river, under Condé's vigorous leading, fording and swimming, with but little loss: the Dutch, after a slight skirmish, withdrew towards Nimwegen. The King, next day, crossed in a boat at his leisure: and the bridge being complete, the rest of the army easily entered the Betuwe. This is that famous 'passage of the Rhine.' of 1672, which caused so immense a sensation at Paris, and made Louis a popular hero. No doubt the move was strategically all-important, laying Holland at the King's feet: had he moved vigorously forwards, the war would have been over in a few days. But the crossing of the Rhine at its shallowest part, with no serious opposition and with an overwhelming force, was in itself no great affair: 'the idle dwellers in Paris came to regard it as a prodigy: the common belief was that the whole army had swum the rapid Rhine, in face of an entrenched enemy, and in spite of the murderous artillery of an impregnable fortress called Tholus[2].' Boileau ended his Epître au Roi on the occasion with a stately line, 'In two years I await thee on Hellespont's shores[3].' His whole account of the campaign and the passage of the Rhine is pompously absurd. Napoleon

[1] This 'Tholus,' as the French wrote it, was a slightly fortified custom-house on the left bank of the Rhine.

[2] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 114 (ed. Louandre).

[3] 'Je t'attends dans deux ans aux bords de l'Hellespont.' Boileau, Ep. iv. l. 172. A lively satire of 1704 catches the trait:

'Un poète véritable
Depuis trente ans se morfond,
Attendant sur l'Hellespont
Ce monarque redoutable.'

Nouveau Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 244.

The age did its best to temper despotism with epigrams.

TO ILLUSTRATE

THE

CAMPAIGN OF 1672.

spoke slightingly of the affair, calling it 'an operation of the fourth class[1].'

Turenne at once pushed forward, and seized Arnheim: the Prince of Orange, seeing his danger, left garrisons in the strong places on the Yssel, and fell back to Utrecht. His position was most alarming; outmatched in numbers and quality of troops, he knew that also behind him at Amsterdam weak counsels prevailed, and that even many of his officers could not be trusted. They made no stand in the fortified towns, and some of the commandants were suspected of treachery. But now Louis came to his help: for while Turenne would have vigorously followed up the blow by a march on Utrecht and Amsterdam, the King turned aside to the right, and leisurely set himself to reduce the forts on the Yssel, which were now of no importance at all. His favourite warfare was that of town-taking: for this brought him rapid and sure triumphs, and demanded that kind of vigour he possessed; it involved few risks of danger to one who did not expose himself too much, and required no general grasp of strategy. Burnet speaking of this moment says boldly that 'his understanding and his courage were equally defective[2]:' and La Fare declares that with overwhelming forces the King missed the point of the campaign: that the least strategy would have reduced all Holland. At last the King moved on to Utrecht, which surrendered at once. Naarden, halfway between Utrecht and Amsterdam, was taken; and had fifty men been sent on to seize Muyden, which commands the chief sluices of that district, the war had been at an end. But Condé had been wounded in crossing the Rhine, and Turenne was told off to watch the Great Elector who was coming down with an army; so that Louis was entirely in Louvois' hands. He stayed at Utrecht, while Rochefort mismanaged the advance beyond.

The affairs of the Provinces seemed to be at their worst.

[1] Napoléon, Mémoires, v. p. 129.
[2] Burnet, Own Times, i. p. 322 (ed. 1724).

Of the seven, the King had completely occupied three, his allies had also paralysed the two eastern provinces; Holland was defenceless, Zeeland alone was untouched. The Dutch seemed fascinated; in Amsterdam the utmost dejection reigned; ships were laden with the civic wealth, and a calculation made as to the number required to transport all the chief citizens to Batavia: men talked of opening every sluice, and restoring Holland to the Ocean, and of then sailing away to transfer the Republic to happier shores. Not only was the French army expected daily to appear before the capital; but the Duke of York might at any moment defeat the dauntless Ruyter, and land English forces on the coast: lastly, the opinion steadily gained ground that the De Witts would let all perish rather than allow the Prince of Orange to rise. These views were strengthened by what leaked out respecting the offers made to the French King. The Grand Pensionary undertook to cede Maestricht and all the towns held by the Dutch outside the Seven Provinces, such as Breda, Herzogenbosch and Bergen-op-Zoom. Had Louis accepted these terms, he might have retained his reputation for moderation, while he would have had both the Spanish Netherlands in his grasp and the Seven Provinces themselves at his feet. Pomponne wished him to close with the offer: but Louvois, harsh as ever, and seeing which way his master's wishes ran, counselled him to refuse. He was determined to render the Dutch powerless for the future: and demanded, beside the cessions offered, a fine as payment of the cost of the campaign, the establishment of the Catholic faith, and a formal acknowledgment, made yearly by a humble embassy and a medal, of their submission to the Protectorate of France.

When these terms became known, dejection gave place to the courage of despair: the people of Amsterdam rose and compelled the Grand Pensionary to appoint William of Orange Stattholder; the States-General were obliged, much against their will, to cancel the Perpetual Edict, which had been passed to exclude for ever the House of Orange; and to recognise

the young Prince's authority. His first step was to open the Muyden sluices: the sea poured in, and Amsterdam, protected by the waters and a fleet of light vessels, was saved from the immediate peril. Another and a worse outburst of feeling took place in the capital: the mob fell on and massacred the two illustrious brothers, John and Cornelius de Witt, who had so long governed the Seven Provinces with dignity and success, but whose policy had at last brought them to their present strait. William's enemies have ever since accused him of having instigated this disturbance, and French historians have re-echoed the statement: yet the least knowledge of the Prince's character makes one feel the improbability of such a charge; we may safely believe Burnet, partisan though he was, when he says, 'he spoke of it always to me with the greatest horror possible.'

Though William of Orange, now William III of Holland, had no hand in this murder, he and his country owed everything to it. The Provinces seemed to enter on a new life: the Prince, helped by Fagel, sent envoys all over Europe to stir up opposition to France: he was not without hope, seeing his close relations with the English Court, that Charles might now be led to abandon the war, and to take up a line of policy more suitable for England, and more in harmony with the wishes of his people.

On the other hand, the King of France, weary of waiting, foreseeing little glory, and having great attractions at home, returned with the élite of his troops to Paris; there all met him with the utmost enthusiasm and delight. His entry was superb: he seemed to have touched the highest pinnacle of glory: his flattering subjects gave him the splendid title of 'the Great[1].'

[1] 'A solemn debate was held all about Paris, what title should be given him. *Le Grand* was thought too common. Some were for *Invincible*; others were for *Le Conquérant*. Some, in imitation of *Charlemagne*, for *Lewis le Magne*: others were for *Maximus*. But *Très Grand* sounded not so well; no more did *Maxime*. So they settled on *Le Grand*. And all the ladies of Paris seemed to vie in flattery. It appeared that the King took

The remainder of the campaign in Holland and in Luxemburg was indecisive: time, however, was as life-blood to William of Orange; before the winter he had induced the Emperor Leopold to declare himself, and an army under that great captain Montecuculi came down to the Rhine; an alliance was struck between the Emperor and Frederick William, the Great Elector of Brandenburg; Brunswick and Hesse followed their lead; the Spanish Court plucked up courage and ordered the Governor of the Netherlands to take the offensive. The French army was much weakened by the garrisons thrown into some fifty strong places, against Turenne's advice. Turenne himself with fifteen thousand men made firm head all the winter, and in the teeth of Louvois' orders not only effectively hindered the Great Elector and Montecuculi from joining the Prince of Orange, but actually drove them far into Germany. In the spring of 1673 the Great Elector declared himself neutral, and the Imperialists were thrust back into Bohemia.

It was clear that if France would grapple safely with the Dutch she must first clear the line of the Meuse. Accordingly the campaign of 1673 centres on the siege of Maestricht, which was undertaken in great pomp by the King; with Vauban as his scientific adviser, and with his own spirit of hard work and vigilant persevering love of detail, he succeeded in reducing it after thirteen days' attack. The incidents of the siege confirmed the current opinion that Louis le Grand was not great by reason of his courage[1]. Maestricht taken, the campaign was over for the King: he divided his troops, left some in garrisons, others he sent to reinforce Turenne on the Rhine, who was once more pitted against Montecuculi; and nothing more came of the great siege and capture of Maestricht.

At this time (Aug. 1673) a League was made at the Hague

pleasure in it.' Burnet, Own Times, i. p. 333. The title of 'Le Grand' was not, however, solemnly conferred on Louis till 1680.

[1] 'Vigilant, exact, et laborieux; mais les excessives précautions que le faux zèle de Louvois et de quelques autres leur fit prendre pour la sûreté de sa personne, et qu'il souffrit, ne firent pas un fort bon effet.' Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 272).

between the Emperor, the King of Spain, and the United Provinces; the King of Denmark, the Elector of Saxony, and the Duke of Lorraine joining them. It is clear that Louis XIV had now entirely broken up the basis of European policy laid down in the Peace of Westphalia: the old antagonisms had given way before the terrible threat of French universal monarchy. Europe had found a new enemy in the King of France, and the venerable Empire and the most Catholic King had discerned their champion in the Stattholder of Holland, a young man of twenty-three years, the head of a Republic, and a Calvinist.

In the autumn of 1673 Turenne was on the Rhine with thirty thousand men, to watch Montecuculi coming up from Bohemia: the Duke of Orleans attacked the Spanish Netherlands with twenty thousand men; Condé on the lower Meuse was opposed to William of Orange. But Montecuculi brilliantly outmanœuvred the great master of strategy; and the Stattholder having also slipped out of Condé's hands, the two armies, in spite of all the efforts of the French, formed a junction not far from Coblenz, and captured Bonn. It was said at the time that that town had been left defenceless by Louvois from jealousy in order that he might damage Turenne's reputation. All through these campaigns that great captain was ill-supported, received foolish orders from home, and was pitted against large armies. Yet his last campaigns are his most brilliant feats of strategy.

The fall of Bonn not only barred the French approach to Holland by the Rhine, but it compelled the ecclesiastical Electors to reconsider their position. Cologne made peace; Trèves and Mainz joined the coalition; even the fierce Bishop of Münster could do no more. The Great Elector prepared to break his neutrality: and at last, disgusted at the course of affairs, and angry with France, the English Parliament forced Charles II to make peace with the United Provinces (Feb. 1674), and to take up a neutral position. The only friend left to France was Sweden: the Swedes, jealous of Brandenburg,

longed for an opportunity of strengthening themselves in North Germany. France contracted her force in the north, retaining only Maestricht and Grave, and leaving in the minds of the Dutch an abiding horror, as of brutal and almost fiendish atrocities[1].

The allies formed two great armies: one under the Statt-holder, threatening Hainault, and opposed by Condé; the other in Germany, gathering for an attack on Alsace; against this great force Turenne was sent. In the south, Schomberg successfully defended Roussillon against an impending Spanish attack. The war from being offensive became defensive; there was no longer any question of the destruction of Dutch freedom.

Instead, Louis decided on recapturing Franche-Comté: Turenne therefore attacked the Duke of Lorraine, and, defeating him by a skilful movement at Zeinheim early in the year 1674, effectually hindered him from interfering with the King's plans; the Swiss were amused with proposals of neutrality for the Burgundies; Louis even persuaded them to refuse a passage to the Imperial troops. Then he entered Franche-Comté and reduced it all in a six-weeks' campaign: he was before Besançon early in May, and returned to Fontainbleau before the end of June. Thus this ancient county, with its independent jurisdictions and Imperial Suzerainty, fell at last to the French kingdom, and merged its several life in that of the great monarchy. The Jura became the frontier of France, the famous 'Hole of Belfort,' the gap through which so many an army had poured into the midland province of France, was now completely in French hands: the possession of Franche-Comté seemed to secure the possession of Alsace and the Rhine frontier. It was obvious that Lorraine must be swallowed up ere long. Directly Franche-Comté was subdued, Turenne felt himself at liberty to turn his attention towards the storm

[1] See Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV, pp. 122, 123 (ed. Louándre). See also Romain de Hooge's great engravings in his 'Advis fidelle aux véritables Hollandois touchant ce que s'est passé dans les villages de Bodegrove et Swammerdam et les cruautés que les François y ont exercés. 1673.'

now gathering in Germany; large bodies of troops were converging on the Rhine, and it would be well if, by swift strategy, he could beat them in detail. He therefore crossed the Rhine at Philipsburg, caught the Imperial troops on the 16th of June at Sinzheim in the Palatinate and defeated them completely; nor did he rest till he had driven them out of that country and forced them to take refuge behind the Main. Then followed the first wasting of the Palatinate, the one dark blot on Turenne's memory. The strategical effect of the deed was proved in the next campaign: it was as important for the Germans to have the Palatinate intact as for the French to be masters of Alsace. The unfortunate and helpless Elector saw the burning towns from his high castle at Heidelberg: it availed him little to send a formal challenge to his great adversary; the ruthless destruction went on, till one of the fairest provinces of Germany was reduced to charred ruins and barren wastes. The ill-treatment of the inhabitants answered to the spoiling of their lands. Turenne spent all July devouring the part of the Palatinate which lies on the right bank of the Rhine, August he devoted to that on the left.

At the beginning of September the Germans at last crossed the Rhine at Mainz, and even Paris was seriously alarmed: it was thought that their great force would overrun Lorraine, perhaps penetrate into Champagne. The Court sent orders to Turenne to abandon Alsace and fall back for the defence of points nearer home; he objected to this, and Louis was persuaded to let his great captain act as he would. Thereon he skilfully held the Germans in check, till the wasted districts could support them no longer: they then recrossed the Rhine, and ascending the right bank, suddenly seized on Strasburg, whose burghers had hitherto been scrupulously neutral in the war. With Strasburg, Alsace was at their feet: they poured over into it; the population was everywhere friendly to them. Turenne, who had hastened to the threatened point, fought and won the hardly contested battle of Enzheim, where Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, commanded a body of

English troops in French pay, a force which attracted much attention during this war[1]. The enemy, especially with help of the Great Elector who soon after this joined the Imperial troops, was far too strong for him, and even with large reinforcements from Condé's army Turenne could only observe and threaten from the rough country near Hagenau: when cold weather set in he drew back, as if he would winter quietly in Lorraine. The Germans blockaded Breisach, and spread themselves along all Upper Alsace for the winter. The Duke of Lorraine was full of hopes: early in spring the allies would recover his territories and Franche-Comté, and he would reign once more.

They had forgotten their great adversary, who could fight in winter as well as in summer. No sooner were they at rest, dreaming of future victories, than Turenne, dividing his army into several columns, traversed in profound secrecy the whole length of the Vosges chain; before the end of the year he had the satisfaction of seeing all his forces, in spite of bitter weather, rain and snow, converge on Belfort with undiminished strength. Without waiting a moment he broke in on the Germans near Mulhouse, defeating them utterly: some fled to Basel, the rest in great confusion recoiled to Colmar. There the Great Elector rallied them; at Turckheim, holding unfortunately a position too long for his strength, he was defeated and turned. There was nothing for it but a retreat. The allies rolled back towards Strasburg along the river Ill, and thence across the Rhine to Kehl: in a few days there was not a German soldier left in Alsace, so completely had Turenne done his work. This, Turenne's last campaign, for he was killed early in the next, is counted as one of the most skilful and successful feats of war ever achieved by French military genius. The great captain returned amid universal plaudits to Paris, bearing himself with a modesty and simplicity which served to heighten his reputation.

[1] See Sir W. Temple's Memoirs from 1672 to 1679, Works, i. p. 392 (ed. 1740).

The campaign of 1674 in the North had not been so brilliant: yet the grand schemes of attack sketched by the allies were defeated there also. Condé, unable to resist the greater forces of the Stattholder, had drawn back to the Sambre near Charleroi: thither the Prince of Orange followed him, hoping to get past him into Champagne. But Condé was too strongly posted, and William had to fall back towards Mons. On his retreat he was overtaken at Senef (11 Aug. 1674) by Condé, who utterly defeated his rearguard and took his baggage. The main force of the Prince's army, which was some miles further on its way, soon returned to the rescue: posted with great skill in wooded hills protected in front by marsh lands, and defending itself with stubborn tenacity, it repulsed every attack. Condé, with reckless courage, once and again hurled his troops at the unyielding lines of the allies, till nightfall closed the strife. Even then he declared that at daybreak he would renew the attack, and all around shuddered to hear him, for they felt 'that he was the only man in the army who still wished to fight[1].' In the end he thought better of it, and, under cover of the darkness, withdrew, the allies doing the same. Both sides claimed a victory; 'but whoever had the honour, they both felt the loss[2].' The French, if not actually victors, carried off all the advantages of the day: the Prince of Orange was obliged to give up all thought of penetrating into France; he even had to abandon his attempt on Oudenarde. He succeeded in taking Grave: it was the only fruit of all the great preparations and efforts of the allies in this year 1674.

Things looked well for France in the end of this third year of her war. Her armies, often far inferior in numbers, had been successful on every side; in the North invasion was arrested ere it reached the frontier, and with almost dramatic force had been pushed back in the East after overrunning Alsace; the ten Imperial cities, grouped round Hagenau, had been made French; Franche-

[1] Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 275).
[2] Sir W. Temple, Memoirs, i. p. 389.

Comté, a great defence to France on that side, was secured. The King's agents had succeeded in raising up troubles for the enemies of France, hampering them and distracting their rear. The Swedes attacked the Great Elector on the northern Baltic shore: in Poland, Sobieski, the newly elected King, was altogether French in sympathy, with a French wife and strong anti-German prepossessions: there were discontents in Hungary and Transylvania, which made the eastern flanks of the Emperor's terrritories very uneasy and unsafe: the Turks were quite inclined to cease from war with Poland[1], and to resume their old aggressive policy on the Danube.

France redoubled her efforts for the campaigns of 1675. Turenne returned to the army of the Rhine with almost independent authority; for he had preferred this to the pleasure of overthrowing Louvois, which he might probably have achieved, had he been ambitious of a factious political victory instead of warlike triumphs. The King himself set out to take command of the army of the North, seventy thousand strong, thinking that this campaign would decide the fate of Holland.

In the East, though the Great Elector had been compelled by the Swedish invasion to withdraw his troops from the Rhine, the Duke of Lorraine was on the Moselle, opposed by Créquy, whose army was intended to connect that of the North with that of the East. The Prince of Orange was pitted against Louis, and Montecuculi, a worthy antagonist, against Turenne.

The Germans wished again to occupy Alsace, and aimed therefore at Strasburg; the French hoped to drive their foes back into the Black Forest. For six weeks Turenne and Montecuculi struggled for the mastery in the difficult country between the river Kinzig and the little town of Renchen, a campaign which has excited the utmost admiration of military judges. At last Montecuculi was forced by his antagonist's consummate skill to fall back to Salzbach, towards the north; and there Turenne came up with him: 'I have them,' he cried with

[1] Peace was made between them in 1676.

exultation, 'they shall not escape again':—then, as if in irony at man's proposals, while he was making a final observation of the enemy's position, a chance shot struck him, and he fell dead in the midst of his staff. It was the dramatic close of a great man's life: in a moment of exultation, seeing his skilful tactics all but crowned with success, he is suddenly cut off by a spent ball aimed at a venture. 'So died, at the height of his glory, not merely the greatest soldier of this age and of many others, but also the most excellent man and the best of citizens. I venture to assert that of all the men I have ever known, he is the one who seems to me to have approached most nearly to perfection[1].' Nor is this too much to say: his modesty, which could not talk of self, stood out in striking and pure relief against the universal self-praise and adulation of the time: his whole soul belonged to his country. How great is he when compared with Louvois, even with Condé himself: he extorted even the King's respect and admiration, and, hardest task of all, bore down his jealousy. No man was ever so free from self-seeking: we may even consider his conversion to Catholicism as the act of the man who desired to give all to his King and to France: he was no statesman, but a noble citizen, and one of the greatest of soldiers.

The whole plan of the campaign was shattered: that chance shot ruined Créquy's army on the Moselle, and arrested the army of the East, which sought only how to get safely across the Rhine again; it paralysed the King's efforts in the North. The effect of his death is the fullest testimony to Turenne's worth. The letters of Madame de Sévigné paint in most vivid colours the consternation which reigned in Paris: it was felt that the opposition to Louvois and Madame de Montespan had lost its chief support. 'Just as Quantova' (so Madame de Sévigné calls the ruling mistress) 'was going to Fontainebleau (whose pleasures became very pain by multiplicity) in order to forget all in amusements, come tidings of Turenne's death—consternation sits on

[1] Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 282).

every face; Condé is hurried off for Germany; France sits as a widow. Instead of seeing the end of the campaign, one knows not where one is . . . was not that cannon charged from all eternity[1]?'

Montecuculi, after vexing the dejected army in its retreat, crossed the Rhine at Strasburg, and laid siege to Saverne and Hagenau. The Duke of Lorraine attacked Trèves, and at Saarbrück utterly defeated Marshal Créquy, driving him back into the town, where he was forced to capitulate with all his army (Sept. 1675). It was his last act: the old duke, a man worthy of a happier lot, was never restored to his country; he died later in 1675, bequeathing the long-drawn hopeless struggle to his son. In the earlier part of the campaign in the North the King had secured the upper Meuse, by taking Liège, Dinant, and Limburg, and, with Maestricht in his hands, had threatened an advance into Holland. This was now no longer to be thought of: the King's army, obliged to weaken itself in order to defend the Eastern frontier, whither Condé was despatched to make head against the Imperialists, fell back to the Sambre and stood on the defensive. The King himself returned to Paris, where all the well-known elements of his happiness, his courtiers, his mistresses, his flatterers, awaited him.

Condé, ill in health and vexed in humour, still did his best, and restored the fortunes of France in Alsace; with a prudence and skill worthy of Turenne himself, without a single battle he drove the Imperialists across the Rhine, after having obliged them to abandon the sieges of Saverne and Hagenau.

Whether his proud spirit was offended by the manifest preference of France for his great rival, or whether his infirmities were really too great to be borne, we cannot now say: at any rate the Great Condé closed with this campaign his brilliant career, retiring to Chantilly, and living in quiet there

[1] Lettre de Mme de Sévigné à Mme et à M. de Grignan, Paris 31 Juillet, 1675 (No. 421 in Hachette's 'Grands Écrivains de la France').

for the shattered remainder of his life[1]. There his sufferings were lightened by the society of the chief writers and wits of France: Racine, Boileau, Molière, formed a brilliant group around the aged chieftain. Literature, little prized at Fontainebleau unless it servilely ministered to royal tastes or sang the royal glories, found a refuge and place of freedom in the charming retreat of this great nobleman; and when he died the marvellous eloquence of Bossuet raised an eternal monument to his glory in the funeral oration he pronounced over the Great Condé's remains.

The war languished in 1676. In the North the King took Condé and besieged Bouchain: when the Stattholder pushed up to relieve the place, Louis hesitated about fighting; he had never fought a pitched battle, and evidently shrank from it. His generals advised him to attack; but he sent for Schomberg, and he, seeing which way the King's mind went, declared against fighting a battle; for Bouchain, a safe advantage, could well be taken without it. Thus Louis 'lost the very finest occasion he could ever have had for gaining a victory[2].' It is possible that the King was right, though not heroic: the object William had in view, that of cutting off the Duke of Orleans, who was besieging Bouchain while the King lay at Condé, was defeated; and Bouchain fell: Louis may well have shrunk from the great risks of a pitched battle, when a solid advantage could be reaped without one. When Bouchain was taken, he returned to Versailles, while William laid siege to Maestricht, but failed to recover that strong place.

On the German side, the whole strength of the allies was concentrated on Philipsburg, which the new Duke of Lorraine succeeded in taking 'under the very nose of Marshal Luxemburg.' Philipsburg, as Turenne had said, 'was worth a province;' it was all-important to France as securing the transit of the Rhine, and especially so before the seizure of Strasburg. It

[1] Died 1687.

[2] Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 284).

is said that Marshal Rochefort, who was blamed for the loss, died of regret[1].

Elsewhere unsuccessful, or at best successful in small things, the arms of France this year gained new lustre, and a glory for which she has ever been eager, on the sea. Her ships in the Mediterranean, commanded by Du Quesné, were pitted against a formidable Dutch fleet under Ruyter: a battle was fought off Stromboli, in which the French were victorious, having done marvels on what was to them almost a new element. It is said that the noblesse of France, weary of the Court, and conscious of the antagonism between them and the King, eagerly embraced this new and adventurous sea-life: it offered a good career, and possibly tangible fruits of royal favour: in dash and intelligence they seemed peculiarly well suited for their new career. In the gulf of Catania the hostile fleets met again; a terrible battle ensued in which Ruyter found his death: the Dutch ships took refuge at Syracuse. Du Quesne also suffered much; but presently receiving reinforcements, boldly attacked the Dutch and Spanish fleets off Palermo, and once more defeated them utterly. The Spanish sea-power was now annihilated; the Dutch fleet destroyed. After the death of their great admiral, their ill-success on land, and the failure of their attempt on Maestricht, the spirits of the Dutch sank to a low ebb; the Prince of Orange was perhaps the only man who did not lose courage, although he, more than any one, except the ill-fated Ruyter, had been the victim of Spanish imbecility and falsehood. The Spaniards never told the truth, and always exaggerated their strength. With almost Chinese folly they described themselves as well-found and comfortable, when perhaps they were half-starved; and having, by the pride which remained alone of all their ancient qualities, misled their allies, whom they induced to reckon on their help, were the chief causes of the disasters of these years[2]. This

[1] Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 284).

[2] Burnet, Own Times, i. p. 405: 'The late King told me that in these

sudden upspring of French naval power was a powerful inducement to England to abandon her very uneasy position and to enter into the coalition.

France and Holland now began to wish for peace: Louis doubtless regretted the severe terms he had demanded at Utrecht; for France was exhausted and discontented; her enormous expenditure had necessitated oppressive taxation, sales of offices, and finally great loans. Colbert was in despair; he saw staring him in the face the ruin of his country; all his plans for commerce were overthrown, his great Companies failed; his only resource was an ever-increasing pressure on the people, who repaid him with maledictions. He bore the cross that Louis might enjoy the crown. Whole districts along the frontiers were ruined; the noblesse disaffected; revolts broke out in Normandy, Brittany, and Guienne: the great towns showed an inclination to side with the country districts. Louis at last was forced to wish for peace; though neither William of Orange nor the Emperor had the least desire that way, the Dutch were as much set on an accommodation as the French: negociations went on.

Negociations did not stay the warfare. In 1677 the King came down very early into the North, taking Valenciennes and Cambrai: the Duke of Orleans invested Saint Omer, and defeated the Prince of Orange at Cassel (11 Apr. 1677). Saint Omer fell, and the French overran all Flanders. It was said that Louis took very ill this brilliant success of his brother, who had won a pitched battle, while he went on with his inglorious siege-triumphs: it is certain that Orleans never again was asked to command an army[1].

On the Lorraine frontier the French were still more successful. Créquy first skilfully hindered the Duke of Lorraine

campaigns the Spaniards were both so ignorant and so backward, so proud and yet so weak, that they would never own their feebleness or their wants to him. They pretended they had stores, when they had none; and thousands, when they scarce had hundreds.'

[1] Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 285).

from joining the Stattholder, who was besieging Charleroi; when the Duke withdrew into Alsace to meet the Germans, he, with incredible celerity, got before him, crossed the Rhine, and defeated and captured the 'army of the Circles' under the Duke of Saxe-Eisenach. Thence without a pause he returned into Alsace, and after again defeating the Duke of Lorraine, once more suddenly recrossed the Rhine, and sweeping on Freiburg, surprised that important city, in which he spent his winter, resting his shattered army after such swift and wearing feats of war.

In the latter part of this year 1677 William of Orange came over to England to visit his uncles, King Charles and James. He found at first but little satisfaction from them in the matter of the proposed peace: but before his visit was over, through the management of Danby, Charles was brought to see that the Protestant party in England was very much irritated, and might be quieted, were he to make a match between the Stattholder and the Princess Mary, the Duke of York's daughter. She was a Protestant, she was William's cousin-german; and the Stewarts were ever tender on that point. Though Charles generally supported the side opposed to that of the Prince of Orange, he willingly on these several grounds approved the match. It was regarded in London as a great blow to the French and Catholic party, though Charles himself was still evidently trimming between the two sides, and was by no means ready to give up the French King's subsidies, which enabled him to dispense with Parliament and with the inconvenient expressions of opinion certain to find utterance if the Houses met. He hoped too that the marriage would dispose William towards peace; as he said, when he announced to him his approval of the match, 'Nephew, remember that love and war do not agree well together[1].' The French King, however, was very angry, specially with the Duke of York: 'he received the news as he would have done the loss of an army.' The upshot was

[1] Burnet, Own Times, i. p. 410.

that Charles was driven at last, in January 1678, to declare war on France.

War went on as usual on the Rhine: Créquy keeping the upper hand and doing much damage to his antagonist the Duke of Lorraine; in the Netherlands Louis took Ghent; the English fleet was ordered by Charles to do nothing,—for had not Louis the money? The Dutch, seeing that no real help could come from England, pushed on the negociations at Nimwegen. The burgher-party at Amsterdam were offended with William for his marriage, and there was a decided reaction in Holland against him.

Peace had been talked of ever since 1673, when there had been a futile congress at Cologne under mediation of the Swedes. Bishop William of Fürstenberg, plenipotentiary of the Elector of Cologne, a man warmly devoted to Louis XIV, had been arrested as a traitor and thrown into prison by the Emperor's orders: the Fürstenbergs were a powerful family at Strasburg and Cologne, and the King refused to listen to any terms till he was set free. This put matters off till 1675, when we find Louis consenting, at the joint prayer of Charles of England and of Fürstenberg's brother, to waive this preliminary[1]: he thereon requested his brother of England to act as mediator at Nimwegen, a post which Charles readily accepted; he issued invitations to the Princes to send envoys. The next difficulty lay with the Duke of Lorraine, the French Court refusing to recognise the young man, or even to give him his titular rank, and the allies insisting that they would not attend the Congress unless the passports of his ministers were made out with his title in full. The Congress was looked on 'as a thing ended before it began.'

At last, however, after many delays, the Congress began in 1676. France hoped to conclude a separate peace with the Dutch, so as to sever them from their allies; and the States were minded that way, but feared to break with their old friends, nor

[1] Lettres de Louis XIV, Œuvres (ed. 1806), v. p. 544.

could they forget the ingrained enmity of Louis towards them. Austria was sullen, 'as losers use to be,' and 'very slow and resty'; the Germans were in no hurry for peace, hoping for great successes still to come; the Spaniards flattered themselves that both Charles II and the Parliament of England would support them; Sweden, having suffered in the war, was keen for peace; Denmark her rival, and Brandenburg her enemy, were just as keen for war. With such divergence of tempers and interests, no wonder that the Congress lingered long.

The diplomacy of France mainly sought, as we have said, to sever Holland from the allies: that of the others to preserve their union intact: they drifted on, waiting to see what the war would bring. The Stattholder's visit to England and marriage in 1677 turned the tide in favour of peace: from that time the States were bent on closing the war, and Amsterdam played into the French King's hands.

Charles II acted as he ever did, in name a mediator, in heart a partisan of France; Louis had won over the Dutch burgher-party by offers of commercial advantage: when English troops came over and lay about Ostend and Bruges, with menacing attitude towards the French, who had now taken Ypres and Ghent, the Dutch were all the more eager for peace.

At last the true terms of peace were drawn up at Ghent by Louis and the Dutch envoy Beverninck:—Holland should suffer naught; Louis would defend her against any who turned on her; he would restore her to her old position, and assure her commercial prosperity; England should never triumph over her at sea. In return Holland must sever herself entirely from her allies, unless they came in to the stipulated terms.

Hereon peace soon followed and was signed; Holland including Spain, and France Sweden, in the terms, just before midnight on the last day agreed on between the parties, the 10th of August, 1678. While these things were being negociated, the French army was pressing Mons very hard, and the Stattholder strained every nerve to relieve the town: ten thou-

sand English soldiers were ordered up to support him. On the 15th of August, four days after the signature of peace at Nimwegen, William made a sudden and unexpected attack on Luxemburg's camp at Saint Denis, near Mons. Luxemburg knew that peace had been signed: William knew it also, though apparently, no official notification had as yet reached him[1]. The French were at first surprised and their outer defences taken; then they rallied and drove out their assailants with heavy loss. The Prince has been gravely blamed for this unnecessary bloodshed; and it is certain that it might well have been spared. But he was stung to the quick by what he deemed a hollow and disgraceful peace, and would gladly have broken it by a great victory over the besiegers of Mons.

So peace came at last: a peace 'which seemed as it were to establish the domination of France over all Europe; her King had risen to be the arbiter of all in this portion of our hemisphere[2].'

[1] In a letter to Fagel on the 15th William says that at midday he had received no official tidings of the Peace. His attack was made that evening. Burnet, to whom William talked about it, says, 'He indeed knew that the peace was upon the matter concluded. But no intimation was yet made to him.' Own Times, I. p. 423.

[2] Mémoires de La Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 286).

CHAPTER III.

THE RISE OF MADAME DE MAINTENON AND HIGHEST SPLENDOUR OF THE REIGN.

A.D. 1678–1685.

THE Peace of Nimwegen was dictated by France at the expense of Germany and Spain, Holland having become the accomplice of Louis, and Charles of England his paid agent. It left sore feelings everywhere, and was for France nothing but a basis for future aggrandisement. It is on this ground that we reserve the detail of the terms of peace for the opening of a new period. For while most treaties have aimed at closing up causes of strife, and may be taken as representing the final equilibrium arrived at after a struggle of years, others, on the contrary, are starting points from which some ambitious power, or some newly-growing principle, has made a fresh departure, beginning another era of aggrandisement or influence. Of the former kind, for example, were the Treaties of Vervins and Westphalia; of the latter, the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle and this of Nimwegen.

There were three separate acts in this peace-drama: the Treaty between France and Holland, signed 10th August, 1678; that between France and Spain, signed the next month; and thirdly that between France, Sweden, the Emperor and the Princes of Germany, which was not concluded till the following spring.

The Great Elector, profoundly dissatisfied at the restoration

of the Swedes in Pommern, stood out against peace for a while, but had to come in at Midsummer, 1679, while Denmark did not accede to the general pacification till September, a full year after the first treaty had been signed. Then at last France could truly boast, according to the legend on her proud medal that 'Peace had been full-made according to her Lord's dictates[1].' Two great personages alone seemed to resist at last — strange union of dissimilar elements in the world — Pope Innocent XI, whose nuncio protested against the peace, because the Papal See refused still to recognise the Peace of Westphalia, whereon it was based[2]; and William of Orange, who, though he stood for the moment alone, never swerved from his belief that Europe must yet come to a life-and-death struggle with the great Monarch.

1. The conditions of the peace between France and Holland[3] were simply that the two powers kept all they had, save that France agreed to restore Maestricht and its dependencies to the Dutch; it was the only strong place which Holland had not retaken. A favourable commercial treaty was annexed, by which Dutchmen in France and Frenchmen in Holland were to enjoy all the privileges of natives: the effect of this document was more favourable to the Dutch than to the French, and this was the price for which they had consented to sever themselves from their allies. They had also stipulated as a preliminary that France should restore Messina, which she had held since her brilliant Mediterranean campaign against Ruyter, to the Spaniards; and the unlucky Sicilians were suddenly and in spite of all promises handed over to the mercies of their hated and angry taskmasters. When we give Louis due credit for that excellent quality in his character, his tenacity in holding by his friends, we must also remember the heartless way in which he left these poor Sicilians to their fate.

[1] 'Pace in suas Leges confecta.' De la Hode, Histoire de Louis XIV, iv. p. 168.
[2] De la Hode, Histoire de Louis XIV, iv. 187, 188.
[3] Dumont, Recueil des Traités de Paix, vii. part i, p. 350.

2. With Spain the terms were not so simple[1]. France restored to Spain Charleroi, Ath, Oudenarde, Courtrai, Limburg, and Ghent, with some lesser places; while Spain had to cede in the north the important frontier-towns of Valenciennes, Condé, Bouchain, Maubeuge, Cambrai, Saint Omer and Aire, Ypres, and some others: so giving to France a stronger frontier-line on that side: to the east Spain gave up all claim on Franche-Comté.

3. The third treaty, that with the German powers[2], was in name at least a renewal of that of Münster. That great standpoint was accepted, save that France gave up Philipsburg, receiving Freiburg in exchange for it. It was agreed that the Duke of Lorraine should be restored, under the conditions of 1659; but he refused these terms, which granted him in fact only the usufruct and revenues, while France held military possession of the Duchy: he preferred to retain all his claims and grievances; and spent the rest of his life as an Austrian general.

In 1668 Giustiniani had referred to the risks by which Louis was yet surrounded: 'Portugal at peace; Spain with great armies in Catalonia; the English fleet in the Bordeaux waters, the Dutch navy at Rochelle, ready for landing; the Huguenots in arms, all the realm in revolt:' now in 1678 all was greatly changed: Europe was at the King's feet; tranquillity at home was nowhere seriously threatened, the troubles in the west having blown over: men had never before realised how great and compact France was. She had resisted all the powers in league, had made conquests on every side; her exhausted foes were obliged to accept her terms of peace. Louis had kept afoot a series of armies, three hundred thousand men in all: he had subsidised Charles of England, the Swedes, the neutral or friendly Germans, Bavaria and Hanover, Cologne and Münster; his crown-pieces were well-known in Hungary and Poland. When

[1] Dumont, Recueil, vii. part i, pp. 364, 365.
[2] Ibid p. 376.

all was done, the royal splendour was not one whit diminished: those who saw beneath the surface knew that France was fainting under the burden; but to the common gaze all seemed as plentiful and sumptuous as ever: the Dauphin was magnificently married to a Bavarian Princess, Maria Anna; new works were taken in hand; the costly splendours of Versailles approached their completion; the city of Paris in 1680 specially voted to the King the title of 'Le Grand.'

Louis stood at the topmost pinnacle of his glory: to see how far adulation could go, one must turn to Bayle's 'Thoughts on the Comet of 1680,' a treatise which for base and shameless flattery stands unrivalled; or we must read the obsequious historiographer Pélisson, who calls his master 'a visible miracle'; or watch La Feuillade's mad adoration of the statue he had erected to his King on the Place des Victoires at Paris; 'thrice he rode round it at the head of his regiment of guards, with all those prostrations which in old times the pagans used before the statues of their Emperors[1].' Nor was this merely the extravagance of eccentric courtiers: it entered into all things. The pencil of Lebrun has left on the walls of Versailles the splendid apotheosis of the Monarch: his Court-poets composed hymns in his glory, and it is recorded that Louis even hummed his own praises with tears in his eyes. He turned eagerly towards those who flattered him and ministered to his tastes; and in these critical years of his life, when so much might have been done to restore the shaken prosperity of France—while Colbert still lived and all was tranquil—the Great Monarch finally and fatally chose the evil before the good, and grandly led the way towards the downfall of his country.

For a man cannot safely live for himself: these years had worked great evil to the King's character, strengthening the worse elements, bringing out his selfishness and indifference to the well-being of others. In theory he had always affirmed his own omnipotence, calling himself lord of the persons, the wills,

[1] Choisy, Mémoires (Petitot, II. lxiii. 303).

the goods, of his people; he now treated all offices of state as his private property, even selling them, as in 1681, by public auction. He created a huge army, entirely dependent on himself, having done away with those great personages, the Constable, the Admiral, the Lieutenant-General, whose offices conferred too large a power on their holders. The noblesse he sedulously depressed, even trying, though in vain, to persuade them to follow commercial callings; at last he was obliged by the 'hungry and rapacious swarm[1],' whose proud and turbulent freedom he had turned into a mean and troublesome dependence, after absorbing as many as possible into the army and navy, to embody whole corps of gentlemen, and to send noble regiments to the wars: they proved very annoying to that true soldier Turenne. The rest of them passed a wretched existence at Court, waiting on the smiles of that most serene Providence their King. He took it very ill if any of them withdrew to their estates, and never rested till he had got them back again to Versailles. While he promoted the most deserving of the clergy, he took care to keep them in due subjection, for he had all the patronage of France in his hands. His favourite instruments, the Jesuits, ruled over his conscience, accepting the power his favour gave them in return for their ingenious treatment of his moral conduct. No churchman was allowed to touch the great engine of state-government: the more prominent bishops, well-chosen, decorous personages, had the great French gift of eloquence, and heightened the brilliancy of the Court by their oratory. Just as the princes of the Renaissance, believing little and making little pretence to act on Christian principles, nevertheless grouped round them those inspired painters of religious and devotional subjects whose masterpieces are the glory of the world, because they deemed the artist's pencil an honour and ornament to their thrones; so now in the grandest period of the reign of Louis XIV, the preacher was employed to throw additional lustre on the Monarch, to heighten the con-

[1] Stephen, Lectures on the History of France, ii. p. 360.

trasts in his life, to declaim with dazzling eloquence against the vices of the day, 'smiting right and left like a blind man,' as was said of Bourdaloue: they added the piquant flavour of their brilliant denunciations to the vicious enjoyments of an immoral age.

In literature, apart from oratory, there was little freshness or freedom, except on the stage. There the comic muse was allowed licence permitted to none other: the genius of Molière not only delighted and amused the King[1] and Court, but also cast ridicule on the follies of the noblesse as well as on the literary coteries, the 'précieuses,' whom Louis heartily disliked. The tragic muse had also liberty, especially when she dealt with grand and heroic themes. But if she touched, as in Racine's Athalie, on the evils of despotic power, the cold shade of disapproval speedily succeeded the sunshine of royal favour. The historian was ever treated well: his power even Kings conciliate, who live for posterity. Satire, in the person of Boileau Despreaux, was long neglected, until one day Vivonne obtained leave to present the poet to the King. When Louis asked him Which he thought the finest passage in his works? the ready courtier, after some demur, replied by quoting a fulsome panegyric on his master, which he had carefully written for the occasion[2]. The King could not conceal his delight; the poet was at once taken into favour and was placed on the pension-list.

On all hands profusion ruled: the admirers of the great age have applauded to the echo the false and foolish saying that 'a great expenditure is the almsgiving of Kings'. The whole country suffered under the burden of the Monarch's splendour: vast unproductive works distinguish and crush the whole period. A few artists, a few hundred artisans, were supported by

[1] See his courtly second Preface to the Tartuffe in 1667: 'Pour faire rire le monarque qui fait trembler toute l'Europe.'

[2] This panegyric was substituted by Boileau in the second edition of his Epistles, after this interview with Louis XIV. It occurs at the end of Ep. I. (Œuvres, i. p. 295, ed. 1722). The story is told by Peignot, a warm admirer of Louis (Dépenses de Louis XIV, p. 131). See also the note in Boileau (ed. 1722), i. p. 294.

it, but the outlay bore no useful fruit, and was wrung from the poverty of the nation: even the results have failed to secure the admiration of the world. The great palace at Versailles, 'which one marvels at and shuns,' as Saint-Simon says, is heavy and dull: there the King seemed to take delight, as at Marly also, in ill-chosen sites[1], on which all might be due to him and nothing to the merit of nature. There may be great differences of opinion as to the cost of these needless works: it is clear that much waste must have taken place, and that too in days when the crushing cost of heavy armaments had disabled the country from bearing any additional burdens.

Naturally cold-hearted, Louis as he grew older showed more and more how he centred everything in himself: his favourites were thrown aside one after another without a thought or a regret; he displayed shameful indifference to the comfort and even to the health of his Court. Saint-Simon describes with malicious and graphic power how he caused a serious illness to the Duchess of Burgundy, and his explosion of anger at her for it: he ends by the remark that Louis 'cared for no one and thought of no one but himself, and was all in all to himself[2].'

This principle he put into practice during these years, in which he carried out the advantages gained over his neighbours by the Peace of Nimwegen. Louis is reported to have said that 'Self-aggrandisement is the noblest as well as the pleasantest occupation of Kings,' and, in war or peace alike, by triumph in the field or by interpretation of treaty-obligations, he steadily kept this object in sight. For this purpose, while the other powers, with a sigh of relief, disbanded their great armies after the signature of peace, Louis kept his on a war-footing: for this he set his great engineer Vauban to fortify and strengthen all his frontiers: for this he entered on that scheme of aggression which is known in history as the 'age of the

[1] 'Le plus triste et le plus ingrat de tous les lieux, sans vue, sans bois, sans eau, sans terre, parce que tout y est sable mouvant ou marécage, sans air.' Mémoires de Saint-Simon, viii. p. 126 (ed. Hachette).

[2] 'Était à soi-même sa fin dernière.' Mémoires de Saint-Simon, iv. p. 116 (ed. Hachette).

Reunions.' His first thought was to make France, as von Ranke says[1] 'a central fortress, of which he was commander, and the approaches of which he vigilantly guarded and strengthened.' To this end a new engine was invented in the Reunions, a kind of hook with which to draw in all that was worth having over the frontier. When Vauban undertook his great task he fortified, on the sea-coast Dunkirk, La Rochelle, and Toulon; on the Spanish side Bayonne and Perpignan; towards Italy Pinerolo; for the Upper Rhine, Freiburg in the Breisgau and Huningen; for the route eastward, Saarlouis; for the Meuse and Moselle, Maubeuge on the Sambre; for the northern frontier Lille, his great masterpiece. The three centres of the royal system of defence were, for the north Lille; for Lorraine and the Lower Rhine, Metz: for Alsace, the yet missing and necessary link was Strasburg. It had been clearly shown in the last war that Strasburg might be very dangerous to France: and this must be remedied.

Now the Peace of Westphalia, on which the Treaty of Nimwegen between France and the Empire was based, had used the phrase 'with their Dependences' when speaking of the places ceded to France. This phrase was left purposely indefinite[2]. Thus, the Three Bishopricks 'with their districts' were to belong to France, just as they had belonged to the Empire: but then what did this include? they had their temporal districts, and their spiritual districts: there were fiefs under the Three Bishopricks which lay well within the Empire; were these too to be French? Again, feudal 'Dependence' was closer in France than in Germany. In Germany at this time a 'dependent' district was simply under the authority of the tribunal of its lord; whereas, in France, it was directly and closely subject to the Crown, even as the French King had much more central power than the Emperor had. In Germany, therefore, 'Dependence' was a far less galling tie than in France. Was now the French or the German use to prevail?

[1] Französische Geschichte, iii. p. 329. [2] Ib. iii. p. 331.

Since 1648 these questions had never been discussed between the two nations: France was too much occupied to insist on her interpretation; in the days of the Fronde and of the Triple Alliance nothing could be done. Now, however, when all Europe yearned for peace, and France was strong, Louis determined that he would seize on all that the more favourable interpretation of these convenient questions could bring him: he also invented a happy machinery by which he became both suitor and judge in his own cause.

Accordingly, in 1679 he established the first of his 'Chambers of Reunion,' tribunals composed of subservient officials, before whom were laid all questions as to the extent of the King's jurisdiction on or over the frontiers: their commission was 'to examine the nature and extent of the cessions made under the Treaties of Westphalia, Aix la Chapelle, and Nimwegen.' This first chamber sat at Metz for the Three Bishopricks; two more chambers were created, one at Besançon for Franche-Comté, the other at Breisach for Alsace. It is interesting to note that at exactly this same time (1680) Sweden, the friend of France, set up a 'College of Reunions', as an instrument of the absolutist revolution of Charles XI[1], with the object of recovering to the Crown its lost or alienated domains. The way in which these Chambers began and were worked may be seen from a brief account of the origin of that of Metz. The Bishops of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, who had all been appointed by the French Crown, were ordered to send in to the King an account of all the possessions and claims of their respective jurisdictions: it was found that these in many cases stretched into the Empire, and were still under the overlordship of the Emperor: they declared that so much had been nibbled away or torn off that a court was needed to decide on usurpations or lapses from neglect or length of occupation. Thereon a kind of Committee of the Parliament of Metz was formed into a separate body, and became the first 'Chamber of Reunion.'

[1] Koch, Tableau des révolutions de l'Europe, ii. p. 57.

The machine worked speedily and well: ere Europe quite understood what was going on, the Court had already given its judgments in favour of the King: it is so simple when the same person is suitor and judge. The French view as to the meaning of the word 'Dependences' was affirmed; the French form of overlordship acknowledged: large districts and strategically critical points were handed over, and occupied promptly by French soldiers and engineers.

The most singular case was that of Alsace. Here the Breisach Chamber had a splendid field for annexations. By the Peace of Münster the sovereignty over Upper and Lower Alsace had been ceded to Louis, with a clause saving the rights of the 'immediate' nobles[1]. These men therefore still swore fealty to the Emperor: moreover, there were in Alsace ten little 'immediate' towns or 'Imperial cities' which claimed the same rights, and these up to 1680 had retained a kind of dim independence. In that year, however, they finally submitted to the King—the nobles were harassed and persecuted: the decrees of the Breisach Chamber were harshly executed by French soldiers.

The judgments and edicts of the Breisach Court had, by implication at least, extended as far as Strasburg; and it is easy to see how important it was for Louis to secure that key of the way from across the Rhine into Alsace. The citizens were Lutheran, and much opposed to France: while the two ruling bodies, the Town-Council, and the Chapter of the Cathedral, were interested on the French side: the Fürstenbergs in the Chapter being devoted to France, and the civic authorities venal. The citizens, helpless themselves, and aware that no help could come from Germany, sadly saw their fate draw nigh. Late in September 1681, Louis, instead of going, as had been expected, to Chambord, made a progress to Metz; and when the Imperial Ambassador, in his uneasiness, asked the reason of this journey towards the frontier, he was told without hesitation

[1] I.e. who held straight from the Emperor, and continued therefore to do so whatever might become of the district in which their lordships lay.

or concealment that the King was making this visit in order to secure his rights under the Treaty of Münster; that he was going to accept the homage of Strasburg; which, as von Ranke exclaims, had been a free German city from time immemorial. An army under Louvois gathered at Illkirch, within easy reach of Strasburg: the town was summoned to accept its new master. The citizens would gladly have made some show of resistance: the magistrates, however, disliking noise and having a due official horror of complications, had left the walls utterly undefended; there was not even powder in the magazines. So Strasburg capitulated (30 Nov. 1681): it was promised its own constitution, its rights, its possessions, and the free exercise of its religion: but the Catholics were to be replaced at the Minster. The real independence of the place, in spite of all stipulations, was gone: the old Imperial city was no longer a member of one of the Estates of the Empire: no longer under a distant and easy overlord who did not and could not interfere; no longer a link in the great chain of German Rhine-cities with their wealth and trade.

The King entered the town a fortnight later: Vauban at once began the grand citadel; the peasantry were impressed for the work, and five thousand soldiers lay encamped outside till all was safe. At the Truce of Regensburg in 1684 Strasburg and Kehl were ceded in full feudal sovereignty to Louis XIV, though nominally it was only to last for the twenty years of the Truce[1].

So Germany lost Strasburg, by a legal fiction and an unscrupulous exercise of force. After one hundred and eighty-nine years had elapsed she returned again to the Fatherland.

At this same time Louis had tidings of another frontier triumph, which at the time must have seemed as important as the securing of Strasburg. French forces had gathered in Pinerolo; negociations went on with Charles IV of Mantua, whose sympathies were French: he left the stronghold of Casale

[1] Dumont, Recueil des Traités, vii. Part ii. p. 83.

undefended, and the French army, suddenly investing it, took it after the merest appearance of a struggle.

Moreover the County of Chini and Alost, which France had taken in the war, were still held by Louis, who wished to exchange them for Luxemburg, which was in Spanish hands. There were delays; whereon Louis, sure that he would meet with no resistance, made a little war against Spain in 1683, 1684, in which Crequi and Vauban took Luxemburg, Courtrai and Dixmude; then the King, having secured enough for the present, made a twenty-years' peace with Spain.

Thus Louis XIV got doorways to the north, the east, and south-east, approaches towards Holland, central Germany, Italy; and spread out his strength with contemptuous disregard of all Europe. The moment was well-chosen; the aggressions sudden and decisive; before men had time to protest the thing was done. The world was heartily weary of war; to protest was to bring up again a risk of a quarrel: the Empire was harassed in the rear by the Turks, who declared war on it in 1682, swept up the Danube and besieged Vienna: but for John Sobieski and Charles of Lorraine they might have overwhelmed the Duchies, and changed the history of Europe. But on the 12th of September 1683, Sobieski, 'the man sent from God, whose name was John,' as the preacher called him after the battle, defeated the Turkish host under the walls of Vienna. That day is the first day of a turned tide, of the gradual recession and decadence of Turkey and with it of her great western ally. 'Here ends,' says Saint-Simon speaking of this time (1683), 'the apogee of this reign, and height of its glory and prosperity. The great captains, the great home and foreign ministers are no more; their pupils and disciples however remain. We are now to see the second age which will scarcely come up to the first, thought it will in all respects be still far superior to his third and last period[1].' Turenne and Condé were replaced by Luxemburg: Lionne was poorly represented by Louvois; Colbert had just died[2], neglected by the King, overwhelmed

[1] Mémoires, viii. p. 80.

[2] 6 Sept. 1683.

with cares, cursed by the people; and Seignelay his eldest son, though an able and vigorous minister of marine, was little able to take his place, or cope with the evergrowing evils of the time. The greatest change of all in these years was the transfer of the King's favour from Madame de Montespan to Françoise d'Aubigné, whom we know as Madame de Maintenon: it deeply influenced the latter years of the reign.

The King had long been constant to Madame de Montespan: throughout the Dutch war his letters show how great her influence was: she was the thorn which pierced poor Colbert's side, and helped to bring him to his grave. Haughty and violent, she was the terror of the Court. Now after the peace other fancies had distracted the King; they were but passing likings, still they irritated her; instead of being all the more cautious and attentive to his wishes, she became more imperious, and alienated him. Not only was the royal favour ebbing: she had the supreme mortification of bringing about her own fall in another way.

As long back as 1666 Madame de Montespan had introduced at Court the lady who was destined to supplant her in the King's favour, and to create a wonderful change in his character and even in his public acts. Françoise d'Aubigné, widow of the comic poet Scarron, was bred a Huguenot; Scarron had married her in her poverty; she had formed the graceful and intelligent centre of a literary coterie at his house. His death again reduced her to want; and then it was that Madame de Montespan took her under her patronage, and got for her the place of governess to the children she had borne the King, the Duke of Maine and his sister. At first Louis thought her a 'Précieuse,' a pedantic prim person, and disliked her heartily; it was with no small reluctance that he conferred on her that estate at Maintenon which gave her the name by which she is known to history[1]. From this moment she

[1] See Saint-Simon, viii. p. 136: 'Qu'elle lui étoit insupportable, et que pourvu qu'on lui promit qu'il ne la verroit plus, et qu'on ne lui en parleroit jamais, il donneroit encore; quoique, pour en dire la verité, il n'eût déjà que beaucoup trop donné pour une créature de cette espèce.'

began, probably with a strong religious objection to the King's connexion with her patroness, to win Louis away from Madame de Montespan. Madame Scarron's life was most reputable; she had a cold temperament which 'went gently, but carried far.' She was never the slave, always the mistress of feeling. Even well into middle life[1], she retained her regular and placid beauty; softly sweet and serious, she gradually won the royal confidence: to her Louis went, as to a haven after storms, when Madame de Montespan's violence was more than he could bear. She had no intention of taking up the position of the imperious mistress; she would gravely and wisely counsel the monarch; would bring him to a better mind; would rid him of his evil companions, and reconcile him with his long-suffering and much-wronged Queen. The King's advances towards herself she gently and firmly checked. In all she aimed at, excepting one great ambition, she succeeded. Montespan was too proud to fight against her, and retired with a pension from Court: the poor weak-minded Queen was once more taken into favour; and for the scanty remnant of her sad life, was treated with due respect. When she died in 1683, the King was privately married, in the presence of Harlai, Archbishop of Paris, Louvois, and another witness, to Madame de Maintenon.

She was never publicly acknowledged as the King's spouse; though great were the struggles made by her friends to get her recognition as Queen. The intrigues for this end form an obscure background to the picture of this period. Thus, it is more than probable that the characteristic tale of the farrier from Salon in Provence is connected with some of the underhand work of the High Catholic party, which desired the public elevation of Madame de Maintenon[2].

One day a decent middle-aged man, with a broad southern accent, presented himself at the guard-room at Versailles,

[1] She was born in 1635, and was therefore forty-eight in 1683; she was between three and four years older than Louis.

[2] Saint-Simon, Mémoires, ii. pp. 15–18.

and asked to be taken before the King, as he had something pressing to tell him in private: rebuffs and refusals were in vain; the honest man quietly persisted; his evident good faith and simplicity attracted notice; at last he got audience of Pomponne, to whom he told his story. It was the tale of Jeanne Darc and Charles VII repeated in this later age. He had seen a vision of the late Queen of France, as he went home one night; she had talked to him for half an hour, had entrusted him with a secret which he must tell the King alone; the secret was one which no man in the world, except the King, knew; when he heard it, then his Majesty would know that he was an envoy accredited from above. The King's confidence thus gained, he was to give him farther messages, the purport of which the good farrier also kept to himself. After three lengthy interviews with Pomponne, he was admitted to see the King in private, and had two or three long conversations with him, to the astonishment of all the Court. Neither the King nor the minister ever said what was the tenor of his communications: Louis treated the matter very seriously, and appeared impressed with the honest farrier's message from another world. His mission fulfilled, he went at once home to Salon, having taken no rewards, stayed to see nothing, showed no curiosity or amazement at the great world; he resumed his hammer and worked contentedly at his forge as of old. It was remarked afterwards that a dear friend of Madame de Maintenon, a lady of strange powers of fascination and a romantic, not too creditable, career, who went for a sorceress in those simple parts, lived not far from Salon; it was whispered about that the apparition of the Queen to the farrier might not have been unconnected with her agencies. It was also said that the farrier's message was to induce the King to declare Madame de Maintenon Queen. These things were only conjectured: the farrier never saw Madame de Maintenon, nor can the truth ever be arrived at[1].

[1] Saint-Simon, ii. pp. 17, 18.

Be this as it may, this unacknowledged Queen was omnipotent over Louis. He worked in her chamber, consulting her as to everything, specially on Church-matters, affairs of conscience, family questions: she was of a narrow monastic temperament, a kind of female Jesuit, with great gifts and skill in direction. 'She believed herself to be universal Abbess, specially in spiritual matters; .... she fancied herself a mother of the Church[1].' Her thoughts and feelings all ran along one well-defined track, infinitely petty and narrow. The King, who professed that he would have no minister, bowed his head and resigned his judgment to this mildly-imperious woman; sagacious, tenacious, and a devotee[2], she held him, though he knew it not, in the closest bands. For two and thirty years Madame de Maintenon was lord of France.

Louis became in some respects a different man: he had less self-reliance; his passions were moderated, nor did any mistress ever again win the royal favour; the religious side of his character, always, even in his worst days, discernible, now became the leading quality. His ambition, his love of glory, his weakness for praise, his obstinacy, his bad faith in treaties, his selfishness, his unforgiving spirit, remained unchanged; the new religious bias even proved to be the origin of some of the worst evils of his reign.

The King, who had become 'a devotee, and that too in the utmost darkness of ignorance[3],' and Madame de Maintenon, with her narrow intellect,—both equally religious, equally afraid of independence of opinion and of literary excellence,—naturally drifted into a system of religious persecution, which specially marks these years. The Jansenists and the Huguenots, in different ways, were offensive to the royal ideas of obedient unity: and they set themselves to reduce both to order. This movement had begun some time back: in 1679 Madame de Maintenon

[1] Saint-Simon, viii. p. 141.
[2] 'Devouée dans les petites choses, et sans générosité dans les grandes.' Martin, Histoire de Français, xiii. p. 608.
[3] Saint-Simon, viii. p. 142.

writes that 'the King thinks seriously about the conversion of the heretics, . . . and will shortly work heartily at it.' But before the Huguenot question called for final treatment, there came, in 1682, a great wave of disturbance to religious opinion within the Gallican Church itself.

The reigning Pontiff, Odescalchi, Innocent XI, a man of noble character and aims, who was a true reformer,—for he began his reforms at home by reducing debt, living simply and purely, and by abolishing nepotist ministers,—found himself in direct antagonism with Louis XIV. He had been much distressed by the Franco-Turkish friendship, and had sided with the Empire against the French King. Louis retaliated by claiming the 'Regale' or right of enjoying the revenues of all vacant benefices, to which he added a claim for the power of absolute appointment. He also looked sharply into the payments made to Rome, and by so doing much increased the distress of the Curia, already deeply embarrassed and burdened with debt.

The Bishops of Alet and Pamiers in the South, men of Jansenist views, resisted this extension of these regalian rights, and appealed to Innocent, who supported them. The King, already in the hands of the Jesuits, more and more regarded the Jansenists as disloyal subjects, and professed to find in their opposition an ultramontanism which he could not endure[1]. Under the advice and with the guidance of the great Bossuet, who was neither Jansenist nor Jesuit, Louis called together the clergy in 1682: led by Bossuet, they drew up four Articles, which have often been appealed to as the clearest statement of the Gallican Liberties. These Articles affirmed (1) the independence of the secular power; (2) the superiority of Councils over the Pope; (3) the fixed sacredness of the Gallican usages; and (4) the fallibility of the Pope, unless supported by the assent of the Church.

The Gallican Church seemed on the verge of a separation

[1] Ranke, Päpste. viii. § 16.

from Rome: men talked much of a Patriarchate: the Archbishop of Paris was thought to desire that splendid post; it was held that the Gallican Church, with the King as its head, could dictate its own terms to Rome; the Assembly, at Bossuet's bidding, was preparing to enquire into the moral system of the Jesuits. Louis, however, was not in the least minded for this: he dismissed the clergy, after having got from them an expression of their obsequious approval to his acts and an implied censure of the Jansenists, and set himself to crush all independence in matters of religion. The Pope did not like his dealings; for he was far too good a man to approve of 'conversions by dragoons[1].' It may not be true that Innocent was actually allied with William of Orange; yet there is no doubt that the Papacy looked with good-will on the resistance which, in the latter part of this decade of years, rose up against Louis.

Ever since Louis had taken the reins of power into his own hands he had shown himself hostile to the Huguenots; in all ways he quietly depressed them; he closed against them all avenues to distinction, narrowed their freedom of action, and frowned on them as bad citizens, as 'a state within a state, guilty of disorder, revolt, warfare at home, disloyal alliances abroad[2];' he complained that he was actually compelled to have treaties with them: the very existence of the Edict of Nantes galled him. Still, so long as Colbert, the last real minister of the King, lived, and the King was elsewhere occupied, the Huguenots had enjoyed tolerable quiet. Now however Colbert was gone, and a time of peace had come; the influences of Madame de Maintenon were also omnipotent. The Jesuits had now complete ascendancy over the King; they persuaded him that 'every school of thought and opinion other than theirs was an attack on the King's authority, and was nothing more or less than a spirit of republican independence. The King in this matter, as in many others, was as ignorant as a child[3],' and listened

[1] Ranke, Päpste. ii. viii. § 16.
[2] Saint-Simon, viii. p. 142.
[3] Ibid. p. 141.

to them alone. To complete the dark circle around him, Louvois, who had been on the side of Madame de Montespan, as long as her fortunes were not desperate, at last came over to her successful rival; and in order to set himself well with her and the King, plunged, with all the haste and harshness of his character, into schemes for the conversion or repression of the Huguenots.

For some time the storm had been foreseen: since the close of the Dutch war many French refugees had escaped to Holland, Denmark, or England: all kinds of influences were exerted to convert those who remained. A 'Bank of Conversions' was established: it was fed by one-third of the incomes of all vacant benefices in France, and was emptied by bribes to the Huguenots, purchasing their adhesion to the established Church. Pélisson, the King's panegyrist, was set over this new department of the state, which 'worked miracles,' as its admirers said: the gazettes were filled with lists of the converted: each post brought the King accounts of fresh triumphs of the faith, and he began to think the end of all divergence of opinion could not be far off. He was much too ignorant as to the real condition of France to be able to form a wholesome judgment of his own. When courtiers told him that the Huguenots were all but extinct, he accepted their statement; all the more because it tallied with his wishes. The Huguenots, driven to bay, had revolted in the South: in 1683, 1684, there were disturbances in the Cevennes, in Dauphiny, in the Vivarais: their congregations, in spite of threats and orders, met for worship as a kind of peaceful demonstration of their strength. They were dispersed by the sword, without resistance: the soldiers and the executioners slaughtered them by hundreds.

Stronger measures were agreed on. Louvois, to retain his master's favour, suggested to Louis that system of persecution which has given the word 'Dragonnade' to the French language. He got permission, in fact, to transfer the management of the conversions from the civil to the military arm: an edict came out in April 1684, which exempted all new converts for two years from having troops billeted on them: the soldiers thus

removed from the docile were quartered on the stiffnecked, and were instructed to make their visits as unwelcome and oppressive as possible. One knows well what this meant; a brutal soldiery, excited by religion and the basest passions, soon made the homes of the poor Huguenots unendurable; their persons, their wives and children, were subject to daily insult: the least of their wrongs was the spoiling of their goods.

This system of 'Conversion by Lodgings,' as Louvois styled it, had also its measure of success: many who had been proof against money were not proof against brutalities and misery, inflicted not on themselves alone, but on their innocent women and children: with rage and rebellion in their hearts they submitted; another triumphant series of reports was forwarded to Versailles.

All this time Louis had been contemplating the step which should crown his great work: he believed that the Edict of Nantes destroyed the unity of the realm, sheltered opinions which seemed to him both blasphemous and disloyal, and stood out as a monument of a toleration which, as he held, disgraced France in the eyes of Europe. It was now nearly a century since that famous Charter of liberties had been granted by Henry IV: the Huguenots had stood by the legitimate Bourbon King against the Leaguers and the Jesuits, and had fairly won their place. Throughout the seventeenth century, though in the troubles under Louis XIII some of the chief Huguenot nobles had taken side against the Crown, the bulk of their party had been peaceable and contented, thriftily enriching their country and themselves. In the early days of Louis XIV they had shown no sympathy with the Fronde: Montauban and La Rochelle had resisted Condé; and therefore Mazarin had confirmed the Edict of Nantes in 1652. From that time onwards their history had been that of good, quiet, industrious citizens and subjects; they had furnished some of the best soldiers and ablest financiers to their country; they had set the best example of industry and ingenuity in trade and manufactures. There were nearly if not quite two millions of them,

the nimblest fingers and readiest wits in France. In the North, at Sedan, they were workers in iron; at Paris they made knick-knacks; in the centre, in Auvergne and Anjou, they were paper-makers; in Normandy and Brittany linen-weavers; in Tours and Lyons they were cunning in silk manufacture; in the Gevaudan they wove woollen goods[1]. There was not a shadow of reason for thinking them disaffected or disloyal: they desired only to enjoy the scanty privileges they possessed, to live in peace, and to benefit their country.

But this was not to be. The King thought that, one way or other, he had converted them nearly all: what was the use, he argued, of an Edict which applied only to a scanty remnant? Why should it not be cancelled if 'the better and larger part of those of the religion' had ceased to resist? So long as Charles II of England lived, Louis perhaps hesitated to take this last step; for Charles was not safe, and, as von Ranke says, it might cost a great deal of money; in 1681 the English Government had remonstrated against the severities practised on the Huguenots, and had granted citizenship to the refugees, finding them a very useful and thrifty people[2]. After the death of Charles, when James II, a man after his own mind, came to the throne, Louis hesitated no longer, and on the 18th of October, 1685, the ordinance revoking the Edict of Nantes was formally signed and sealed. The public celebration of Protestant worship was absolutely forbidden; all pastors must leave the realm in fifteen days; the galleys for life should be their fate, if they dared to officiate again; all children must be brought up as Catholics; all emigrants were ordered to return, or they would forfeit their goods; terrible penalties were denounced against any who might attempt to escape out of France. An illusory concession to the private opinions of the remaining Huguenots, 'till God should please to enlighten them,' closes this amazing monument of the power of religious bigotry, this warning as to the frightful blunders to which despotism is liable.

[1] L. von Ranke, Französische Geschichte, iii. p. 37.
[2] Ibid. pp. 390, 391.

Round the King all were in ecstasy: the venerable Chancellor Le Tellier, who died twelve days later, thanked God that he had lived to see the day on which he affixed the Great Seal to the document, and sang his Nunc Dimittis at the news: Madame de Maintenon told Louis that the act would cover him with glory before God and man: that paragon his grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, who was completely Jesuit-led, applauded; the Church of course was loud in praises and thanksgivings. The King himself deemed that he had reached the highest pinnacle of his glory, the crowning splendour of his reign.

Let us willingly allow that Louis was kept unaware of the worst acts done against the Huguenots[1], and that by education, character, and want of sympathy with his people, he was incapable of seeing the consequences of the series of measures which ended in the Revocation. But more in his excuse cannot be urged. He had educated himself to be ignorant of his best interests, he had surrounded himself with second-rate advisers, he had listened so greedily to the voice of flattery, that this fatal step appeared to him but a splendid example of his power, of the unity of his realm, of his religious zeal. A man cannot be excused by reason of ignorance which arises by his own fault: the chief blame for this suicidal act must ever rest on the head of the great Monarch.

It would not be easy to apportion the guilt of having advised the King. The Jesuits and Louvois pushed him on, persuading him that not one drop of blood should be shed; while it was to Louvois undoubtedly that the cruelties of the time are due. Madame de Maintenon, however, with her measured bigotry, and great influence on the religious development of the King's character, is probably the person, more than any other, to whom France owes this disastrous edict. It is true that her gentler nature disapproved of the severities, though she professed to rejoice heartily over the resultant conversions: she has left behind her some humane phrases, which must be recorded to

[1] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 485, note 1 (ed. Louandre).

her credit: she protected those of her own servants who were Huguenots. More than this she could not do; for when she ventured to recommend milder measures to the King, he told her plainly that 'he feared she had in her still some leaven of inclination for her old belief[1]'. As far back as 1679 she spoke ominously about the Huguenots. 'The King,' she says, 'is thinking seriously of the conversion of heretics: and shortly they will be working hard at it.' Two years later, with a characteristic eye to business, she advises her brother to buy himself a property in Poitou, where, thanks to the flight of 'those of the religion,' land was to be had for a song: she has no word of feeling for the confessors of her old faith; she is quite willing that her brother should profit by their obstinacy. It may be quite true that, as Voltaire concludes, she had not the first hand in it, and that her measured disposition shrank from the violent steps taken[2]; it is equally true that her character and influences were among the strongest of the predisposing causes which led to them.

And thus the year 1685 saw the end of the political existence of the great Huguenot party. The pious and literary Jansenists had already been suppressed; the quiet, thrifty Huguenots, the best citizens in the realm, were now to be cast out: to this despotic government had come; France must henceforth live on the strength of a forced unity. From this moment, when the tendencies which had long been working towards their fulfilment in France, seemed to attain their full success, we may date the beginning of her fall. The absolute monarchy has reached its highest point; the seeds of decay germinate with terrible rapidity, where there is no balance in a government, and when all depends on the will and character

[1] La Vallée. Histoire de France, iii. p. 308, note 2. She was born and brought up a Huguenot.

[2] She says in one of her letters: 'Il est de mon devoir de dégoûter le Roi des arts violents le plus qu'il m'est possible.' But Louis, as S. Simon says, was 'barricadé contre toute le monde . . sous la clef de deux ou trois ministres.'

of one man. To the end of the century things seem, but only seem on the surface, to remain in equilibrium; after that the descent is rapid, and monarchy in France, yearly lower and weaker, drifts helplessly on, till it sinks beneath the outburst of a nation's wrath.

CHAPTER IV.

EUROPE AGAINST FRANCE: PREPARATIONS.
A.D. 1685–1688.

WHEN, after the S. Bartholomew massacre, France sheathed her dripping dagger, and looked around, she saw many gloomy faces at home; abroad, the whole Catholic world applauded vehemently, and was eager to show approval of the deed. But now, when Louis XIV had issued his memorable Edict, it might be praised by obsequious clergy and courtiers at home and by a listless nation; abroad all the powers, Catholic or Protestant, looked on in gloomy silence. The Papacy itself condemned the act. Louis, in respect of both Jansenists and Huguenots, had shown more care for the political unity of his realm than for the religious unity of the church, or for the dignity and interests of the Holy See. In 1573 Europe was in the full swing of the Catholic reaction; 1683 marks an epoch in the political reaction against the domination of France. Now the resistance no longer indicates the clean-cut division between Protestant and Catholic: it is the political balance of power that is at stake, not the ancient faith; and therefore Catholic and Protestant states are soon seen in close union against France in the Augsburg league of 1686.

'France,' said the eccentric ex-queen of Sweden in one of her letters, 'is like a sick man in the hands of rash physicians; instead of curing him by gentle measures, as they easily might have done, they are hewing off his legs and arms.' It is

not easy to say definitely how much of the later misery of France is due to this tremendous blunder of her King. The general tendency of the reign,—it being the attribute of a great King to make great expenditure,—was to increase consumption and lessen production. All that was done tended in this direction: in war or peace alike the expenditure was wasteful and unremunerative. Armies and fortresses withdrew wealth from the fields and looms, while they pressed with ever-growing severity on those who remained at home to work: the building of palaces, the fêtes and glories of the monarch, while they stimulated a few barren trades and arts, squandered the wealth which the wholesome and productive industries of the country collected, discouraged thrifty life, and set a pernicious example to society.

These things were at their height in 1685; nor can their baleful consequences be disentangled from the results which followed the exodus of the Huguenots. It is clear that the sufferings and embarrassments of France went on with tenfold speed from this time: the effects of the exodus were unfortunately but too closely allied with the general tendency of the time.

No two writers agree as to the numbers who escaped. For some years before the Revocation a steady stream had set outwards: Amsterdam alone had passed a decree to build a thousand houses for the emigrants: London saw a new quarter to the East, in the 'Spital Fields, rise into busy and prosperous life: the well-trained eye and deft hand of the French artisan were welcome everywhere in Europe. All this was before 1685: but when the new Edict ordered the Huguenot ministers to leave the country under pain of death; and with the same breath ordered their flocks to stay at home and be converted,—'the most stiffnecked,' as Louis said, 'bearing the stiffest burden,'—can we wonder that the ill-treated and outraged Huguenots paid little obedience to their unnatural master? They streamed across every frontier; grandfathers and children, tender maidens and strong men, the noble and the artisan, undeterred by the horrors of their lot if caught, struggled onwards in a hundred disguises, with thrilling adventures and

escapes; all animated by one spirit,—the determination to join their much-loved pastors, and set up new homes in some less inclement land. They bribed the guards on the frontiers; or they slipped across the open country by night, or they hid themselves in merchandise and were shipped as bales of goods for England: or finding friendly sailors on the coast they embarked in little craft, gladly braving the rough autumnal seas, if only they might flee from the curse and bondage of the conversion at home. Strings of galley-slaves, chained together in long and dreary procession, moving painfully towards the sea, told of the numerous failures to escape. But the most part got away; the very flower of the industries of France[1], they carried cunning arts, and skill and taste, to her rivals, and laid the foundations of a prosperity which endures to this day.

There had been two millions of Huguenots in France: the apologists of Louis XIV try to prove that less than seventy thousand escaped after the Edict: Vauban, wishing not to exaggerate, reckoned that in five years a hundred thousand fled: Voltaire, not a prejudiced witness, says that in the first three years fifty thousand families escaped: he adds that altogether France lost half a million of her inhabitants: Sismondi comes perhaps nearer to the mark when he reduces the tale to three hundred thousand[2]: for even Capefigue, bitterly hostile to the Huguenots, after close and diligent research allows that at least two hundred and twenty-five thousand went forth. If he can trace so many, there must have been a large number who left no trace behind: Sismondi's three hundred thousand seems to be no exaggerated estimate. Nor does this account include the multitude who were otherwise lost to France; who perished in the attempt to escape, or were hung or broken, or languished long years in prison, or laboured out the rest of their days in the galleys. Louis XIV, ignorant as he was of his own country,

[1] See von Ranke, Franz. Geschichte, iii. p. 374, for their industries; and above, p. 226.

[2] Martin puts the figures rather lower, from 1685 to the end of the Century. Histoire de France, xiv. p. 59.

and 'barricaded against his people,' became dimly aware of the misfortune he had brought on France: he imagined that the exodus was a mere perversity, which would be allayed, were men free to come and go. For a short time the penalties on evasion were suspended; the refugees pressed still more eagerly over the frontiers; and the old severities soon began again. And what a misfortune! Here were the thriftiest, the bravest, the most intelligent, the most industrious of Frenchmen, the very flower of the race: some of their best and purest blood, some of their fairest and most virtuous women, all their picked artisans. In war, in diplomacy, in literature, in production of wealth, these refugees gave what they took from France to her enemies, for they carried with them that bitter sense of wrong, which made them henceforth foremost among those enemies, the forlorn hope of every attack on their ancient Fatherland. Large numbers of officers, and those among the ablest, emigrated; among them pre-eminent Marshal Schomberg, 'the best general in Europe[1].' The fleet especially suffered; the best of the sailors emigrated[2]; the ships were almost unmanned. The seamen carried tidings of their country's madness to the ends of the earth: as Voltaire says 'the French were as widely dispersed as the Jews[3]'. Not only in industry, but in thought and mental activity, they were a terrible loss. From this time, literature in France loses all spring and power; and this specially in the Church, where little life was left in the faith which at last, at such a price, had achieved its unity: under the Regency, in the days of Voltaire, at the Revolution, no champion rises up to defend the very citadel of the old faith: all fire is quenched: no one dares to think for himself, no questions may be asked, nor are differences allowed; till, when the intellectual life, the vigorous scepticism, the daring and contemptuous questioning of the eighteenth century, break in upon this sleeping minster of the

[1] Mémoires de Madame de La Fayette, Michaud, III. viii. 218.
[2] Ibid. p. 242: 'La religion en avoit fait évader une infinité, et des meilleurs.'
[3] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV, ch. 36.

Church, no dexterous polemic is ready with any weapon of controversy; no saint with holy prayer and pious works defends the outraged altars of the land.

Abroad, the effects of the Revocation were immediate and very striking. In Holland it instantly strengthened the land-party, and enabled William of Orange to hold his own against the reluctant burghers. In England the effects were still more marked; for there it gave assurance and certainty to all the doubts and anxieties with which the Anglican Church and the bulk of the people regarded the accession of their Jesuit-guided King. Every one believed that James was ready to do all that Louis had done; nothing so much paved the way for the Revolution, although for the time the King's authority was too strong to allow England to join the league against his friend.

The whole policy of the House of Brandenburg came round. Till now, the Great Elector had been very friendly with Louis, shutting his eyes to French aggressions in Germany, and hoping to win Pommern from the Swedes: he had neutralised all the resistance which had begun to spring up against the Alsatian 'reunions,' and the seizure of Strasburg. Henceforth all was changed: Brandenburg was reconciled with the Emperor; his old antagonisms were completely given up; he sent help to the King of Poland against the Turks; he made a treaty even with Sweden. No longer did North Germany believe that the House of Austria was its natural foe: all the old fears and antipathies gave place before fresh and more pressing dangers[1]: the antagonism to France, which in course of ages was destined to weld all Germany into one body;—a process begun by the Great Elector, carried on by Frederick the Great, and brought to its triumphant close in our own days;—dates from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Great Elector gladly welcomed the refugees: as in England they gave new life to manufacture, and as in Holland they quickened commerce, so in Brandenburg they brought in a new age of agriculture:

[1] L. von Ranke, Französische Geschichte, iii. 419.

undrained swamps and barren heaths, tilled by faithful and intelligent hands, soon blossomed like the rose.

Just before this time Louis XIV had been laying down his lines to catch the Imperial dignity, whenever it might fall in: he had made secret compacts with the Electors of Brandenburg, Bavaria, and Saxony: but by this act he undid all his own work; though he still retained some hold on the Low-German Princes who lay nearest him, his chance of the Empire was gone. As if to make the opposition in Germany as vehement as he could, in 1685, on the death of the Palsgrave Charles, Louis rashly claimed the Lower Palatinate in right of the Palatine princess, the Elector's sister, who had married the Duke of Orleans. Alarmed and angry, the German powers could hesitate no longer: in July 1686 they signed the famous League of Augsburg; it was the beginning of that long resistance which at last proved fatal to France.

Even the Catholic powers accepted this League: the Pope himself, Innocent XI, that Austrian Pontiff, who had even supported the Jansenists whom he disliked, because Louis XIV oppressed them; who wished to shelter the Huguenots, and was ready for any step which might weaken his great adversary, who actually counted on the sword of the Calvinist William of Orange[1]—even Innocent (in 1687) secretly joined the League against the Catholic Kings of France and England, against the dominance in Europe of absolutism and the Jesuits. The Emperor and the King of Spain were also in the League with

[1] 'Le Saint-Père du jansénisme
A passé droit au calvinisme,
J'ai pour lui des respects profonds;
Il mérite de la louange
D'avoir choisi pour ses seconds
Schomberg et le prince d'Orange' (A. 1688).
Nouveau Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 125.

It is a mistake to say that Innocent knew and approved of William's plan of interference in England. D'Estrées' letter to Louvois (Œuvres de Louis XIV, vi. p. 499) says distinctly that 'the Holy Father was no little troubled at the resolution of the English to dethrone their King if he did not change his policy': he suggested that the Prince of Orange should march on the Rhine, and support the Imperial and Papal interests at Cologne against Louis and his archbishop William of Fürstenberg.

the Dutch, Calvinists and Catholics side by side, the Electors Palatine and of Saxony, the Bavarian Circles, Franconia, the Upper Rhine. In 1687 the Duke of Savoy came in, as did also the Elector of Bavaria; all the Italian princes sympathised, and even the old friends of France, the Swiss Cantons, threw obstacles in the way of recruiting, which Louis reckoned on to fill up his armies. The League at first aimed at being strictly defensive: it should watch over the political independence of Europe, and, strange change! Austria and Spain bound themselves to protect liberty of conscience. But the defensive attitude is one which cannot last; the incidents of the war, and the cool and daring schemes of William of Orange, could not fail before long to give an aggressive turn to the alliance. Europe will drift surely, and not slowly, into a great war.

It was at this moment that the famous statue of the Place des Victoires was erected, as if to warn the world of the high aims and claims of Louis; it was unveiled with ceremonies of pagan adoration[1]; under the great Monarch's feet lay crushed a many-headed Cerberus, emblem of the Coalition: along the front ran the strange inscription 'Homini Immortali,' arrogating an imperial and more than human glory: by irony of nature, just as 'Alexander when his head ached ceased to be a god,' so now, when men acclaimed Louis as above the level of mankind, and offered to burn undying votive lamps before his image, an abscess, painful and exhausting, brought the proud monarch to the very brink of the grave. In this same year, 1686, died the great Condé, who had become an obsequious courtier, and decorously and politely religious. When they asked him, in his last days, to write memoirs, he replied with proud humility and a courtier's turn 'All I have done is worthy only of oblivion: write the King's history; then all other memoirs will be superfluous[2].'

Early in 1687 Louis was quite restored to health, and ready to begin the second period of his reign. Had he then died,

[1] See above, p. 150.
[2] Martin, Histoire des Français, xiv. p. 75, note 1.

what a magnificent record of grandeur, splendour, unequalled triumphs, would he have left behind him! But the age of great men was over for France: her chiefest generals, best statesmen, most brilliant writers, were all gone. Luxemburg and Duras were poor substitutes for Condé and Turenne; even Schomberg was carrying his sword to the service of the Prince of Orange: Colbert and Lionne are of the past; Louvois, whose favour was already on the wane, had not long to live. The day of third-rate statesmen was come; and Louis, self-satisfied, ignorant, and unable to distinguish between a good and a bad minister,—that surest mark of an incompetent ruler,—flattered himself that he could form fresh statesmen as he would, and preferred, with fatal security, a docile mediocrity to the dangers of originality and power[1]. Barbezieux, Louvois' son, was but a feeble minister of war; Seignelay, Colbert's son, was a good head of the Admiralty, but his health was weak, and he died in 1690, leaving his work in weaker hands: Pontchartrain, most estimable man, was quite unfit to grapple with the terrible confusions and necessities of finance. On every side France loses ground during this period: to the outer eye her splendour is undimmed; if not advancing, she seems to be standing still at the summit of glory: her armies win great victories; she makes head against Europe in arms: yet at the end she concludes, under pressure of her anxieties respecting the Spanish succession, a peace, which marks a distinct and serious falling-off in power, and the recession from some of her proudest pretensions.

In these years of peace the King and Madame de Maintenon had shown anxious care at least for one branch of their subjects: the people might languish, agriculture droop, the thrifty artisan escape to England or Berlin—the small noblesse demanded constant attention. They were in no way formidable, as the great houses might be: Madame de Maintenon herself was one of them, and interested herself warmly on behalf

[1] His admirable choice of the Marquis d'Harcourt as his ambassador to the Court of Spain in the critical time at the end of the century is a signal exception to this general statement.

of poor gentility, always so charming. The military and naval cadet schools of 1682, institutions which were far from successful[1], aimed at supporting, training, and finding a career for the boys of this lesser noblesse. For the other sex, Madame de Maintenon, at the beginning of her power, set on foot the great convent school of Saint Cyr for daughters of the poor nobles, endowing it richly, watching over it personally, and treating it with every mark of favour. It was thither that she retired after the King's death, and, with mild eyes averted, looked never out on the scandalous disorders of the Regency. It was there that, for the King's amusement, she busied herself with pretty shows, moral and religious dramas, and whatever might fitly ally the world with her devotion. For the young maidens of Saint Cyr, Racine, after a silence of twelve years, resumed his pen, and in his later manner produced the Esther and Athalie, which were acted there by the damsels before the King[2]. The dreary Esther was an allegory; Louis is Ahasuerus, Vashti is Madame de Montespan, haughty and bad, who falls before the meek charms and measured character of the modern Esther: she, seated by the King, enjoyed, as a triple triumph, the dramatic success of her protégées, the applause which greeted her poet, and the beneficent sunshine of the royal smile. Her heart was in this richly-endowed 'toy-convent' of hers; she arranged, with sedulous far-seeing care for her own interests and comfort, the terms on which she was to be received and supported by the Convent, whenever her day at Court should be over: at the last she took refuge there, when her royal spouse was on his deathbed[3].

But now Louis was called away to sterner thoughts and

[1] De la Hode, Histoire de Louis XIV, tom. iv. pp. 236, 237.

[2] Mémoires de Mme. de la Fayette, Michaud, III. viii. p. 229.

[3] It is said that Lulli (who wrote music, just as Racine wrote plays, for the young maidens) composed an air for one of these entertainments; that 'the ingenious Mr. Händel' picked it up there, and reproduced it in England, where it became for ever popular as 'God save the King.' The story rests on no sure foundations, and the air seems undoubtedly older than this time.

cares; for the League of Augsburg grew daily more formidable; and war might break out at any time. France, in spite of her ten years of peace, was ill-prepared for war: the King's pleasures had squandered his resources; even the soldiers had been sacrificed by hundreds to his fancies; for that the waters of Versailles might flow a year or two sooner, a whole army was employed, with its head-quarters at Maintenon, in the construction of a canal from the river Eure. The work was unwholesome, and the marshy lands very unhealthy; not only did these costly waters waste great treasure, but thousands of soldiers perished of fevers and other maladies, though, as Madame de la Fayette says, 'this inconvenience'—the perishing of so many souls—'did not seem worthy of any attention, in the lap of that tranquillity which men then enjoyed[1].'

Now, however, these poor soldiers were ordered away from this fatal task to the yet more destructive trade of war, and the costly aqueduct was left incomplete, standing in part to this day, a record of the first unfinished work of the great monarch. Not only were the plans of William of Orange taking definite form, but the capture of Belgrade (A.D. 1688), far away on the Danube, had relieved the Emperor of his worst anxieties, and had set him free to turn his attention to western affairs: and these affairs at first took the shape of a diplomatic struggle on the Rhine, destined in time to have marked effects on the fortunes of Europe. It was all-important for Louis to secure the Electorate of Cologne; for that was the key to all his strategy, being a back-entrance into Holland, while it also secured his influence both in the Palatinate and among the lesser princes of Northern Germany. Up to this time French influences had been very strong in the Chapter at Cologne, and now Louis proposed that William of Fürstenberg should be chosen Coadjutor to the Elector, who had become infirm. But though the Chapter approved, Innocent XI interposed

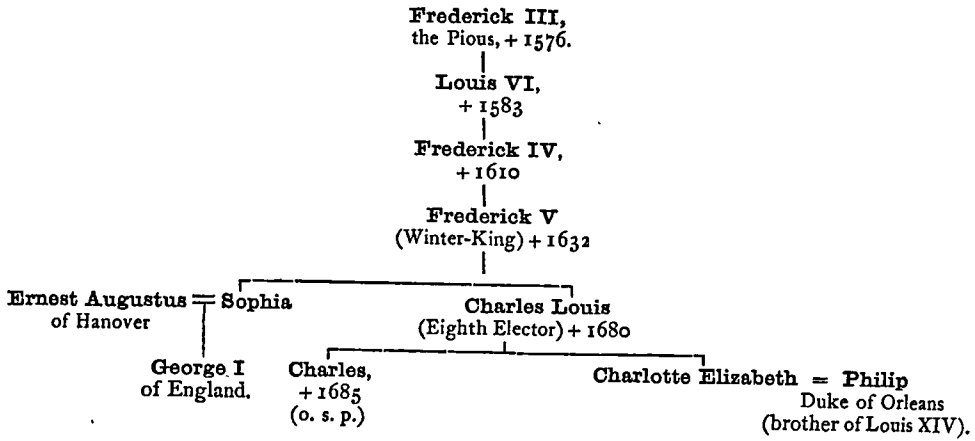
[1] Mme. de la Fayette, Michaud, III. viii. p. 211.

obstacles: and the result was that when, in the course of 1688, the Archbishop-Elector died, vacating not only Cologne, but Münster, Liège, and Hildesheim, Louis found that a new election was necessary. Hot intrigues and bribery followed: the lesser Bishopricks were given to German ecclesiastics[1]; in the Chapter of Cologne there was an eager election; William of Fürstenberg, though he had a decided majority (fourteen against nine) had not the requisite two-thirds; the minority withdrew with a protest in favour of the young Clement of Bavaria, the candidate of the Papal and Imperial interest. Fürstenberg took possession of the Electorate, supported by French troops; a French garrison occupied Cologne itself. The Pope and Emperor declared against the choice of the majority: it seemed doubtful whether Fürstenberg could maintain his position without solid help. The King of France had also to look after the rights to the Palatinate which, through the failure of males in the Simmern line, had come to Charlotte Elizabeth, his sister-in-law.

With this uneasy state of affairs, threatening the very existence of the old Rhine-League and of the French influence in North-Western Germany, on the one side, and the dubious attitude, warlike preparations, and known hostility of William of Orange on the other, Louis stood uncertain what to do. These were days of great anxiety for him. His army was very ill-equipped, his navy worse, his seaports undefended; there was no money, the country was uneasy, the Huguenots, converted in form, were in fact keenly looking for an opportunity to revolt against the pitiless political and religious tyranny under which they groaned; the people generally were irritated and unhappy. Yet Louis speedily gathered together three hundred thousand men, besides the militia of the Provinces; he made perquisitions whenever French troops occupied foreign territory; he sold offices in great numbers; the cities voted handsome sums of money.

[1] Liège chose an anti-French bishop, and Louis avenged himself, a little later, by plundering all the diocese.

TABLE IV.—THE ELECTORS-PALATINE OF THE SIMMERN LINE.



All through the year 1688 the Stattholder's eyes were fixed on England. King James had alienated the loyalty of his people; he was believed to be about to crush the liberties of the kingdoms, so long as they stood in the way of a Catholic restoration. With the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes before them, all Englishmen, Anglicans or Nonconformists, Tories or Whigs, believed alike that a Catholic toleration could only end in their own ruin; they deemed the equality of creeds a chimera, and held that they must exclude the Catholics, or the Catholics would destroy them. Moreover, King James' toleration was a blow aimed at the most conservative feeling in the breasts of English Churchmen, their pride in the exclusive privileges and position enjoyed by their communion, while it equally alarmed the Nonconformist, whose stern spirit of unextinguished Puritanism loathed the faith which it regarded as an aggressive idolatry. The King, as he developed his plans, alarmed by his injudicious zeal both friends and foes: even the Roman Curia did not hesitate to declare that he was destroying what remained of Catholicism in England: the Pope himself drew into closer relations with the powers opposed to the reaction[1]. Then came the birth of a Prince of Wales. In vain did the English people listen to ingenious and elaborate attempts to prove that the babe was no child of the Queen, that it had been secretly brought in by the backstairs: much as they might wish it, they did not in their hearts believe the unlikely tale. There was no doubt that a Catholic heir to the English throne was born[2], and that the prospect of a Protestant successor in the person of the Princess Mary, William's spouse,

[1] We must remember, however, that it is not correct to say that Innocent was allied with William.

[2] The censorious tongues of the time had many a gibe and nickname for the Prince of Wales: there exists a French song which hits both him and Louis XIV (whose enemies declared that he was Mazarin's son):—

'A Jacques disoit Louis:
De Galles est-il votre fils?
Oui-dà, par sainte Thérèse,
Comme vous de Louis-Treize.'

Nouveau Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 175.

was gone. The bulk of the nation, fearing the chances of another revolution, had been quite willing to wait patiently till time brought a change of rulers: they would then have welcomed Mary as Queen, and things would once more have gone well. Now time could bring no change for the better: and meanwhile King James seemed bent on shocking the prejudices and trampling on the rights of his subjects. The heads of all parties opposed to James now placed themselves at once in closer communication with William: they addressed to him the famous invitation of 30 June, 1688 [1], signed by seven persons, representing both the Church of England and the State, both the noble and the popular resistance to royal tyranny. It was not an invitation to William to be King, but to come over and take the lead in a general rising against King James' government. The after-stages of such an act were not discussed: at first the idea of the deposition or abdication of James was not entertained: whatever William may have thought, he played the part at first of a kind of armed mediator, called in between his father-in-law the King and the popular movement. His own ideas and sympathies were favourable to the stricter views as to the royal prerogative: he was no popular prince; he was the champion—strange contradiction!—of the less against the more tolerant. He, who stood in the forefront of the resistance to Louis XIV and his system of repression, was called on to declare, and did declare openly, against the scheme of concurrent toleration and endowment proposed by James. William had to support the Anglican Church in its exclusiveness, securing its supremacy, and declaring for the Test Act, while he at the same time was the champion of Calvinism without Episcopacy abroad. The contradiction, however, was far more apparent than real. For the toleration of James was seen to be a mere snare; men knew that when his Jesuits had got hold of power, they would not long allow it to be shared with others: whereas William's less tolerant position meant at least complete

[1] To be read in Dalrymple's Memoirs, Appendix I, 228.

freedom of worship for the Nonconformist, and liberty of conscience for all.

Though the state of feeling in England seemed most favourable, and all were longing for the intervention of William, he was obliged to employ all the patience and circumspection of his nature, and to make long preparations. He must gather force, ships, men and money; must secure, if not the active co-operation, at least the passive acquiescence of the Amsterdam citizens; he must see the Augsburg League in motion, so as to attract the eyes of Louis towards the Rhine; he must delude that vigilant watcher, D'Avaux, the French Ambassador in Holland, and persuade France that her western coasts were threatened by his armament. Above all, William could not safely move so long as Louis gathered troops near the Flemish border and did not declare himself.

And Louis seemed to balance long; for the decision was weighty, carrying with it the world's fortunes. Should he strike hard at Holland, and so defeat William's scheme, whether it were directed, as he believed, against England, or against the western coasts of France? or should he make sure of his influence on the Rhine? Was the Emperor or the Prince of Orange the more dangerous foe? To put it in another way, were the dynastic interests of the French Crown to prevail over the general interests of France? On the reply to these questions hung the fate of Europe: Seignelay saw clearly what ought to be the answer, and warmly urged an immediate attack on Holland. But in the Council, Louvois' views fell in with the King's narrower grasp, and ultimately prevailed.

It was a great blunder; even the middle course of an attack on Cologne, or a demonstration against Maestricht and the line of the Meuse, would have sufficiently encouraged the friends of France on the Rhine, while it would have paralysed William, even if it did not force him entirely to change his plans. But Philipsburg and the Palatinate, the German alliances, and the family claim on the Palatinate

seemed more important than all the rest[1]; and thither the French troops were ordered to advance.

No moment in history is fraught with such consequences: William's 'aut nunc aut nunquam' expresses the whole thing. Nothing shows more clearly the want of true capacity, of true greatness, in Louis, than his decision at this point: he deliberately, against advice, chose the weaker before the stronger course, and cared more for the narrow than for the broad issue. He thought that the threat of his displeasure would keep Holland quiet; for he knew how timid and half-hearted was the commercial party, as represented by the Amsterdam burghers; perhaps he even hesitated to embroil himself with Spain by a direct attack on Holland across the Netherlands; war with Spain, the succession-question being yet unsettled, might overthrow all his plans, and lose him the great prize of his life: he no doubt trusted to the chapter of accidents; as Monmouth had failed and perished, so probably would William. The men and the time, however, were very different; and a man of clearer vision would have decided otherwise. Though Louis knew how determined a foe he had in the Stattholder, he failed to discern the pertinacity, swiftness, the far-reaching and well-conceived plans of his rival. Had he been really great he would not have made these mistakes: for the great are known to the great; and the instincts of greatness forbid the choosing of the smaller aim in preference to the larger. The wise politician, too, knows what to do, how much he can accomplish with his means, which course is best to follow. Louis had a clear view as to his own aims and ends: but they were not pure, not free from personal and private ambitions. Dynastic glory was more to him than the general settlement of Europe or the larger interests of France.

So Louis missed his opportunity, and left to his rival room to act as he would: nor did William fail to seize the fortunate

[1] See Table, p. 241.

moment. It is part of the greatness of William that he was not touched or disheartened by the infectious caution and timidity of the magistrates, and that by a rare combination of unflinching boldness and prudence, of long and anxious preparation, and sharp incisive action at the right moment, with a single stroke, he changed the whole course of European politics.

The opposition between the two Princes runs throughout. No two men could be more antipathetic; none so opposed in all that makes up their respective claims to greatness. They were unlike in all; in physical appearance and bearing William was thin and hectic, Louis splendid and vigorous in frame and face: the Dutchman reserved and dry[1], the Frenchman full of grace, and, if he liked, of winning condescension: William, a changed man in battle; if before he was 'of a disgusting dryness,' then he became 'all fire'; yet it was a fire without passion: Louis never shone in war, and was quite out of place on a battle-field. While the one was deplorably ignorant and untaught, the other had a splendid memory, and had been well-trained in the days of adversity; William was a great linguist. Though he did not enough condescend to his people, his designs were always great and good: if he had any ambition, it was that of leading the politics of Europe to a good end; whereas Louis had little grasp of general principles, and his ambitions were personal or dynastic. There is no more untrue judgment passed on William than that of Massillon who said he 'had been a great man, had he never wished to be King,'—for that crown of his, the crown of England, little as he liked it, little as in some ways it became him, was the great triumph of his political system: it, and it alone, enabled him to curb his rival's power.

We may set aside S. Simon's curious tale of the Trianon

[1] 'Spoke but little and very slowly, and most commonly with a disgusting dryness, which was his character at all times, except in a day of battle.' Burnet, Own Times, ii. 304.

Window[1], which he declares to have been the cause of this great war of 1688. The memoir-writer, especially if so prejudiced as the Duke was, is ever apt to mistake some trivial circumstance for a true cause. He sees so much of the pettiness of those motives which seem to set the world in action, he is so little conversant with the larger steadily-moving powers which underlie all great revolutions, his view of the nature of princes is so apt to be contemptuous,—for he sees through them while they are hidden from the common gaze by their position,—his love of piquant anecdote, the gossip of courts, is so strong, that the noble memoir-writer becomes at once the most interesting and graphic of story-tellers, and the most unsafe of guides. That Louvois, though the window-story is a mere trifle, was at the bottom of the final decision in favour of the Rhine-war, and that he was usually swayed by secondary and unworthy motives, is true enough. Yet the causes of the war of 1688 are deeper than the crooked building of a window, or the fears of a minister for his place: they lie far down in history, they depend on the working-out of general principles, on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, on the King's schemes for Germany, on the alarm of Europe, on the expression of reactionary ideas in the character and policy of James II. One can see how strongly the nobler minds of Europe were touched by the greatness of the issues, when we read the account of the last moments of the Great Elector, who died April 29, 1688. His last words were 'London, Amsterdam': his last thought given to that momentous crisis on which the political future of Europe, as he saw clearly, was to turn.

At last the tension became too great; and Louis, after first sending a small force to the Netherland frontier, and finally threatening the Dutch with war if they molested James II, despatched the Dauphin eastwards, at the head of the main army of France. The attack, which began at the end of September 1688,

[1] Mémoires du Duc de Saint-Simon, iv. pp. 302, sqq. (ed. Hachette), where the story is told with all the vivid detail and life of that brilliant and prejudiced author's pen.

was directed at last not on Holland but on the Rhine. Monseigneur[1], guided by Duras, a poor substitute for the generals of the great age[2], was instructed to invest and take Philipsburg and occupy the Palatinate: Vauban and Catinat were then to guarantee success. Fürstenberg opened the gates of Bonn, Neuss, and Kaiserswerth to the French troops: on the other hand, his rival, Clement, thanks to Schomberg, secured Cologne with a strong force of Imperialists. Eighty thousand men under the Dauphin took Philipsburg, and passing on thence occupied the valley of the Rhine as far as to the Bergstrasse. In less than two months the whole Palatinate and the three ecclesiastical Electorates were in French hands.

The relief felt at Amsterdam, when tidings came of this attack on the German frontier, was immense. The funds sprang up ten per centum: the timid burghers no longer held back; William made all haste to complete the preparations for his great enterprise. The States General issued a manifesto, declaring their full concurrence in his plans, though neither they nor he said one word about a change of dynasty in England. A change in policy was felt to be essential to the success of the great struggle just beginning against Louis XIV: neither the States General, nor William, nor the English people, for the moment cared to enquire how that change would have to be brought about, and its permanence secured. Louis XIV saw how it would end, and credited both William and the English with more distinct designs than in fact they had ever formed:

[1] The title of 'Monseigneur,' meaning the Dauphin (just as that of 'Monsieur,' from the time of Gaston, brother of Louis XIII, signified the eldest brother of the King), was not used of the Dauphin par excellence till Louis XIV set the fashion. See S. Simon, iv. 361 (ed. Hachette).

[2] 'Pour opposer au grand Lorraine
Il faudrait Condé ou Turenne;
Plaignons à jamais leur trépas,
Et plaignons le sort de la France
De n'avoir d'espoir qu'en Duras
Qui mettra tout en décadence.'
Nouveau Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 134.

he had heard from Rome[1] 'that the English are agreed with the Prince of Orange to dethrone King James;' and lost no time in warning the English King, and in offering him help. But James was intent on a balancing policy: he would neither side with Louis nor with the League of Augsburg, and refused all aid from France. Now, however, that Louis, leaving him to his fate, had moved on the Rhine with all his force, James took alarm, and offered to join the League against his friend and patron; he declared that the attack on Philipsburg was an assault on the liberties of Europe. Nor is it clear that King James was insincere: he was not the man to be the contented henchman of Louis, as Charles had been: duller and more obstinate, he was also more honest and tenacious of his own power, and could not be bought so easily. But it was too late. The Prince of Orange was ready to sail; his great manifesto was issued on October 10, 1688; in it he skilfully declares his position to be that of the next heir to the throne, coming to defend the laws and religion of England. He made it quite clear that he was prepared to maintain the Test Act. At last, after tedious delays from south-westerly autumnal gales, he landed at Torbay on the fifth of November 1688.

It is no part of this work to trace the progress of the Prince, or the vacillations and treachery of the English Government, or the desertion of those nearest to King James in blood and interests, or the feeble conduct of the King himself: it is enough to say that on Christmas Day, 1688, James, who had sent the Queen and the little Prince of Wales before him, landed on French shore: and that, three days later, William, at the request of the Convention, took into his hands the civil, financial, and military government of England. Before the end of January 1689 the throne was declared vacant; in February the Declaration of Rights was adopted by the vote

[1] In a letter from D'Estrées to Louvois, given in Œuvres de Louis XIV, vi. p. 500, dated 18 Dec. 1687.

of Parliament, and the crown transferred to William and Mary. Scotland followed three months later: Ireland remained faithful, in the main, to James.

So easily and irrevocably did the Catholic effort in England meet its end. It perished without bloodshed or disorder or revenge: its fall is the next stage in the resistance of Europe to the great schemes of Louis XIV. The accession of William III to the English throne gives a new impulse to the world's history.

CHAPTER V.

EUROPE AGAINST FRANCE: WAR. A.D. 1688–1697.

THUS the 'little Lord of Breda' became the great King of England; the Stattholder of timid Holland the leader of the European resistance to Louis XIV. Had the French forces been well-prepared, or the French armies well-led, in these years, while William was not yet firmly fixed on the English throne, Louis might have retrieved his blunder: had James II been a more vigorous Prince; had he cared less, in fact, for his Jesuits and more for his crown, the new government in England would have found it very hard to hold its ground.

But there was no personal ambition or heroism in James II. When he arrived at the French Court, he made a very poor impression: they found him deficient in ability and kingly bearing, and totally without brightness: 'he bore up under his troubles, because he was dull and thick-skinned, rather than from heroism[1];' he offended French society by his subservience to the Jesuits; men heard with something like disgust the declaration of the dethroned monarch that he was 'one of the company of Jesus[2]:' the Archbishop of Rheims, Louvois' brother, as he saw the devout King coming from church, said, with a smile on his lips, 'What a good man! he has given up three kingdoms for a Mass!' The contrast with Henry IV,

[1] Mém. de la Fayette (Michaud, III. viii. p. 234).

[2] Ibid, p. 229: 'Plus les François voyoient le roi d'Angleterre, moins on le plaignoit de la perte de son royaume.'

and his saying, 'Paris is worth a Mass,' was no doubt in every mind. Louis, however, treated his fallen brother with dignity and much generosity, establishing him in a little court at S. Germain, and providing him amply with sustenance.

While Louvois and his friends always urged the prosecution of the war on the side of Germany, Seignelay, as Minister of Marine, and perhaps with some natural attraction towards Great Britain[1], as warmly devoted himself to the war on the sea, and to the restoration of James. To this antagonism in the King's counsels are partly due the failures of the first years of the war; as La Fare says, in speaking of the Irish expedition, 'this war, promoted by Seignelay, because it could be carried out only by his department, the navy, was disliked by Louvois, who did all he could to make it fail[2].'

To resist the coalition, France had but two friends, the Turk and the Dane: the Emperor, thanks to the heroism of Sobieski and the Duke of Lorraine, had freed Europe from fear of the Turk; while Denmark, closely connected with William of Orange[3], might any day pass over to the other side. Louis took great pains to dissuade the Elector of Bavaria from joining the League, but in vain: the Poles refused to listen to him; the Russians, to whom he turned, were too busy in the East.

In a word, France stood alone, face to face with threatening Europe, and she was but ill-prepared for the struggle; the country was uneasy, the exchequer empty. Yet Louis did not flinch from the greatness of his risks: he determined to withdraw his troops from the Palatinate, to carry on the war in the Spanish Netherlands and on the Lower Rhine, to send a force into Roussillon, to organise a home-army to keep down disaffection and to be ready as a reserve, and lastly to equip an expedition for Ireland, in the hope that the Catholic loyalty of that island would afford King James a safe basis for a counter-

[1] He was Colbert's eldest son and therefore of Scottish origin.
[2] Mémoires du Marquis de la Fare (Michaud, III. viii. p. 295).
[3] Prince George of Denmark (brother of Christian V) went with his spouse, the Princess Anne, who was younger sister of Mary, spouse of William.

revolution in England. For these purposes he is said to have had three hundred thousand men under arms.

Early in 1689 his troops were ordered to evacuate the Palatinate: and here too the counsels of Louvois were disastrous to France. He advised the pitiless ravaging of the Rhine districts, and the destruction of all cities, all agriculture, all prosperity in them. The splendid castle of Heidelberg was ruined, the town burnt: what Heidelberg suffered was repeated wherever French soldiers were found; the wanton infliction of misery in this second devastation of the Palatinate[1], at last roused all the Germans, and doubled the energies of the League. The Ratisbon Diet formally declared war in February 1689, and commanded a general rising of the Empire against so barbarous and so brutal a foe. Three armies were set on foot.

France won no laurels in her campaigns of 1689. In the Netherlands the Prince of Waldeck, with the first German army, joined the Dutch and Spaniards under Churchill, afterwards so famous as the Duke of Marlborough. They beat D'Humières, 'as favoured at court as he was bad in the field[2],' at Walcourt near the Sambre; the rest of the campaign ended as it had begun, in trivial movements on both sides leading to no result.

On the Rhine the Elector of Brandenburg, who commanded the second German army, recovered Kaiserswerth and Bonn; higher up, the third army under the Duke of Lorraine besieged and took Mainz: then these two armies united and forced the French back into Alsace and Lorraine.

Lastly, the death of the Queen of Spain in this year set the Spaniards free to declare war on France.

If one would see how much these bootless efforts exhausted France, one should read Louvois' minute[3] on the church-plate which was available for war-purposes, and might be sent to the

[1] The first in Turenne's day, 1674.

[2] Mémoires Historiques, in Œuvres de Louis XIV, iv. p. 290 (written by M. de Grimoard).

[3] Dated February, 1690. Œuvres de Louis XIV, vi. p. 508.

mint. It shows how great was the distress for money, that could compel Louis to listen to such a proposal. The splendid Versailles silver was melted down. All devices were tried; by a debased coinage, by loans, offices for sale, benevolences from the towns, it was hoped that the exhausted treasury might be replenished. With supplies thus gathered the campaign of 1690 was begun: it was carried on with the same want of plan, the same feebleness in command, which had marked the last year's warfare: the King had only two good generals, Luxemburg and Catinat[1], and both of them he disliked: for, as we have said, he was never cordial with his best men, and preferred well-conducted mediocrity to independent ability.

Luxemburg was sent into the Spanish Netherlands; Boufflers commanded on the Moselle; the Dauphin, watched over by Lorges, was on the Rhine; Catinat in Piedmont, for the Duke of Savoy wavered: lastly Noailles was sent southwards to Roussillon and Catalonia.

But this year, indecisive on the borders of France, was destined to produce great results on another scene of action. Louis XIV, warmly seconded by Seignelay, had made every effort to equip a fleet and gather an army for an expedition to Ireland; James was to accompany it, and the command was given to Lauzun. The King's farewell to James was perhaps double-edged: 'the best thing,' said he, 'that I can wish for you is that I may never see you again': and indeed, apart from his desire to see William overthrown, there was doubtless a relief in being well rid of this gloomy Prince, who was never very good company[2]. King James set sail from Brest, and safely landed in Ireland in March 1689: the Catholics, in great force, flocked round him: and all the island, except Londonderry, declared against William. A strong reinforcement under Chateau-Regnault, with men and stores, succeeded

[1] Berwick did not begin to serve as a French general till 1704.

[2] 'On en étoit défait en France,' says Mme. de la Fayette (Michaud, III. viii. p. 234), speaking of his departure.

in landing safely in Bantry Bay: the English fleet failed to annoy them.

Things had become so serious in Ireland that William III, in spite of all the agitation in England, and the terrible risk of a failure, either by sea or land, saw that he must cross over and crush the growing opposition before it spread too far. On their side, the Jacobites were neither wise nor vigorous; they made a lively Court round James II at Dublin, and the highest aspirations of religion and loyalty soared up to heaven from the lips of men whose hearts were careless and their lives debauched: no serious attempt was made to grapple with cautious Schomberg, who was steadily securing his basis of operations in the north. Dissensions broke out between the French and Irish; the treasury was bare. Yet William felt that if the French King chose to throw all his strength into the Irish war it might be fatal to him, and he accordingly set off for Ireland and landed safely there (14 June, 1690), just as James had at last made up his mind to take the field. William was not a moment too soon. Tourville, now in command of the whole naval force of France, had set out to find the Anglo-Dutch fleet, commanded by Torrington. Both admirals had orders to fight: Tourville was willing to obey though he disliked the order, while Torrington resented the interference of Queen Mary and her council. Consequently, when the three fleets came into collision off Beachy Head, Torrington, who felt no good-will to the Dutch, left them to bear the whole brunt of the battle. The Dutch suffered terribly: though the French losses were also considerable, they won a decided victory, which was a great triumph for both Tourville and Seignelay (10 July, 1690). It was Seignelay's last success: he died in that November, leaving the charge of the navy in the incompetent hands of Pontchartrain.

Before his death the fate of the Revolution had been decided on the Boyne. King William wasted not a moment after landing in Ireland. James had advanced as far as Dundalk: but finding that the English and Dutch were coming up rapidly from the north in splendid spirit and condition, he

began to fall back. It was too late; William had him in his toils; with characteristic swiftness he overtook him at the Boyne, 'like the eagle swooping with straight flight on the prey[1].'

The Battle of the Boyne (1 July, 1690) was brilliant and decisive. The great general Schomberg was killed in action; James took horse and fled; and surveying the situation from Dublin, once more showed a strange lack of vigour and interest in his own fortunes. Instead of trying to retrieve the disaster, he embarked at Kinsale, and steered for France. William, who had been wounded in the shoulder, remained complete master of the field: in the next year his general Ginkel beat the French at Aghrim; and Limerick, the only remaining arsenal and stronghold of the Jacobites, capitulated. The Articles of Limerick closed the struggle for Ireland; all danger was over from that side, and William's throne secure. He had been wounded at the Boyne, and rumour magnifying it had told the Parisians that their great foe was killed. Paris fell into a paroxysm of delight: 'that evening I was returning from Sceaux with Seignelay,' says La Fare[2], 'and we were not a little surprised to find bonfires in every street, and straw Princes of Orange which the mob threw into the flames, with a toast to the King. . . . Perhaps it was the greatest compliment ever paid him.' For a month France was uncertain whether William really was alive or not.

In this year 1690 not much was done elsewhere. In the Netherlands Luxemburg beat Waldeck at Fleurus (30 July, 1690); but he was another Vendôme, as careless and inconsequent as he was brilliant in battle. He neglected to press his advantage, when he might have conquered all the Netherlands: he let the allies rally at Brussels, and gave the Elector of Brandenburg time to come to their help. A barren victory was all the result of the campaign, which ended almost where it began.

On the Rhine the Dauphin, in Catalonia Noailles, did as

[1] Ranke, History of England, iv. p. 605 (English translation).
[2] Mémoires, Michaud, III. viii. p. 295.

good as nothing: in Piedmont Catinat had greater things on hand. Victor Amadeus had at last declared for the League, driven to it by Louvois, whose terms were too hard for him. Catinat then attacked him, reduced Piedmont and Savoy, and marched on Saluzzo: Victor, after defeating Feuquières, who was left to secure the head-communications, crossed the Po, and found Catinat near Staffarda, where the French general defeated him utterly.

The three French victories of the year, Beachy Head, Fleurus, and Staffarda, were however more than counterbalanced by the ruin of James II at the Boyne. In 1691 all had to be begun again. Once more Louis made vast efforts; while William III, after securing himself in England, crossed over to the Hague, where a congress of the League agreed to raise their combined forces to two hundred thousand men.

The French King, to mark his sense of the importance of the moment, put himself at the head of a hundred thousand men, and marched to besiege Mons: he still clung to his old tastes in warfare; sieges, not strategy. Vauban as usual displayed all his great skill and energy; William, though he marched up to relieve the place, found the King so strong that he dared not attack him; and Mons capitulated in April 1691. Then Louis felt he had done enough, and returned to France: Luxemburg, left in command, skilfully baffled the allies, who tried to force him to fight; at last in the autumn, William being gone, and Waldeck withdrawing into winter quarters, Luxemburg caught the latter, and inflicted on him a severe check at Leuze. It was a sharp affair, in which Waldeck's whole rearguard was roughly handled. The capture of Mons and this action were all that came of the campaign.

Nothing was accomplished in 1691 on the Rhine: Catinat secured his position in Northern Italy by taking Villafranca, Nice, and Oneglia: in the Savoyard mountains he took the stronghold of Montmélian. In Catalonia little happened, with exception of the capture of Seo d'Urgel.

In the summer of this year death relieved France and Louis

of Louvois, the terrible minister who had ruled them with so heavy a hand. The violence of his temper, which spared not even the King; the crimes, for they were nothing less, which he induced Louis to commit, and under the remembrance of which the royal conscience was far from easy; the dislike of Madame de Maintenon, whose disposition was the very opposite to his—had made his position at Court almost untenable: it had been noticed that he had lost the royal favour, and he himself expected his fall. The anxieties of his position brought on an attack of apoplexy, which carried him off. Every sudden death, every difficult malady, was at that time attributed to poison: it was said that Louvois himself had poisoned Seignelay his rival; and now it was affirmed that the King or Madame de Maintenon had given the deadly draught to Louvois. Saint-Simon, with his voracious love of scandal, assures us that it was so; he is however absolutely untrustworthy in such matters: Louvois no doubt died a natural death.

Terrible as he was, and relieved as all who came near him were, still his death was a blow to the state: there was no strong hand left to direct the war abroad, and to raise supplies at home: he had been a wonderful administrator; had he been carefully limited to the war-office, he might have left a great name behind him, a name of which France could have been proud, for she would even have taken pleasure in the horror he inspired abroad, and in the execrations of Europe over the Palatinate barbarities. But Louvois with a feverish ambition grasped at all branches of public work: we have seen how the worst excesses of the Revocation period are due to him. It should be remembered that to him were due the measures which levelled the privileges of the noblesse[1]. It is said that Louis did not care to conceal his pleasure at the death of his minister, 'This has been a fortunate year for me,' he said, 'it has rid me of three men whom I could not endure; La Feuillade,

[1] Saint-Simon, with all the bitterness of an old family, describes the scandalous way in which the noble youth was compelled by him to serve in the army. Mémoires, viii. 108, 109

Seignèlay, and Louvois.' He felt no anxieties, no doubts, as to his own power to direct the whole state-machine: he named Barbezieux, Louvois' second son, war-minister, and took on himself the main burden. He liked young men; Barbezieux was but twenty-four years old, lively, active, presumptuous, and inexperienced. Louvois was his last great minister; freed from him, Louis only fell the more completely under the influence of Madame de Maintenon and his confessor.

The war, as yet, had in the main been prosperous for France; 'alone against all' she had won battles by sea and land, and taken strong places in the Netherlands, in Italy, and in Spain. But the burdens were terrible, and the great enemy of Louis was now beginning to have his hands free for vigorous action. It was thought that 1692 might be the decisive year of the war[1]. Both sides strained every nerve: huge armies sprang out of the soil, and on the sea France was determined, if possible, to maintain the advantage she had won at Beachy Head: daring corsairs, of whom Jean Bart is the best known, became a terror to the Anglo-Dutch commerce: it was hoped that Tourville would crush the English navy. Louis proposed to act on the defensive in Catalonia, Piedmont, and Germany, and to attack the Netherlands and England: in a word, he would direct all his energies against William's throne.

His plans for the restoration of James II were swiftly matured; thirty thousand men under Marshal Bellefonds were to escort him to England. The most hopeful news came thence; it was thought that, if opinion there had but the King's presence to support it, it would break out into an irresistible counter-revolution; the exiled King was popular with the officers of the fleet, which he had formerly commanded with much bravery and credit; it was believed that Admiral Russell would never fight against him. Trusting to these hopes, Louis ordered Tourville to sail from Brest, and to engage the English fleet wherever he might find

[1] 'Il (Guillaume) avoit marqué l'année 1692 comme l'année fatale à la France.' Œuvres de Louis XIV (ed. 1806), iv. p. 343.

it. It was thought that full half the English ships would desert in action; consequently, though his vessels were ill-found, and far inferior in numbers to the Anglo-Dutch force, Tourville obeyed the royal order, against his own judgment and that of all his officers, and engaged the enemy off Cape La Hogue. There could be but one result: Russell, who had told his Jacobite friends that if attacked he must do his duty as a seaman and fight his best, far from deserting, stood to his guns; the French fought gallantly, and, thanks to a thick fog that came on, drew out of the battle without very serious loss: a little more fair weather would have been fatal to them, for almost the whole Dutch fleet and the blue squadron of the English never came into action, and were still fresh. As it was, the results of the battle, however honourable to French bravery at sea, were very disastrous: many ships escaped through the Blanchard Race to S. Malo; many were so crippled that they were run ashore, to save them from the English, though even then the English got at them and burnt them. King James saw the flames rise before his eyes; with the ascending smoke and fire his plans and hopes were scattered to the winds: his unlucky star, he said, was in the ascendant; he prayed Louis to leave him to his fate[1].

'As at Lepanto, so at La Hogue, the mastery of the sea passed from the one side to the other[2].' Though the French cruisers did many brilliant deeds, and though in 1693 Tourville caught a great fleet of merchantmen coming from the Levant, defeated the escorting ships of war, and took or burnt almost all the enemy, still the weight of power henceforth lay with the English. Never again could a great fleet of French ships threaten to replace James II on the English throne.

In the Netherland war the arms of France had far brighter fortunes. As in 1691 all turned on the siege and capture of Mons, which gave Louis the overweight in the Spanish

[1] L. von Ranke, Hist. of England, v. pp. 50, 51 (Eng. transl.).
[2] L. von Ranke, Französische Geschichte, iv. p. 44.

Netherlands, so in 1692 all should depend on Namur, which, it was hoped, would carry with it the line of the Meuse: 'it is the strongest rampart,' says Louis, 'not only of Brabant but of the Bishoprick of Liège, of the United Provinces, and of a portion of Lower Germany. Beside securing the communications of all these districts, its situation at the confluence of the Sambre and the Meuse makes it mistress of these two rivers; it is splendidly placed, either to arrest the action of France or to facilitate the forward movement of her enemies[1]:' it was also of great natural strength and carefully fortified. The preparations made by Louis were most minute, long-considered, and complete: while Coehorn employed all his learned skill in the defence of the place, Vauban's attack has been handed down as his masterpiece.

With a hundred thousand men Louis moved down on Namur, and invested the town. Marshal Luxemburg was posted on the Mehaigne, to cover the siege. So well were all the French dispositions made, so skilful the engineer-work, that when William came up to relieve the town, with a fine army, almost if not quite as powerful as that of Louis, he could find no weak point in his foe's armour, nor could he tempt him out to battle. He had to look on while first the town, and then the castle, of Namur gave way before the unparalleled skill of Vauban. The place finally capitulated at the end of June 1692.

Louis felt that his honour was safe. In the face of hostile Europe, himself at the post of danger, he had carried through a great siege, and had not been forced to fight a battle. Had he been a real soldier, the fall of Namur would have been the beginning of the decisive campaign of the war. He might have fallen with overwhelming force on William, driving him back into Holland. But field-warfare was not to his taste. Instead of striking the fatal blow, he made an oriental progress back to Paris with all his splendid Court: the fine army was much weakened by his escort, and by the sending of troops to the Rhine and Piedmont: Marshal Luxemburg was now

[1] Œuvres de Louis XIV (ed. 1806), iv. 344, 345.

fain to act on the defensive. William with great skill caught him early in August, in a bad position near Steenkirke, and forced him to fight: even though surprised and taken at a disadvantage, Luxemburg, who was never so happy in his inspirations as on a desperate battle-field, not merely saved the French army from defeat, but inflicted very heavy loss on his assailant, who had to supplement a masterly attack by an equally masterly retreat, and fell back to Brussels. The only battle ever won by William, in spite of his great genius in war, was that of the Boyne; that was a victory which secured to him three kingdoms; while his foes, thanks to their own supineness, or to his amazing fortitude and skill under defeat, never succeeded in drawing much advantage from their triumphs.

With Steenkirke ended the Netherland campaign, in which France had been very successful. In Italy Catinat was now pitted against the rising genius of Prince 'Eugenio von Savoye,' as he loved to sign himself, to indicate his three nationalities. Son of Olympia Mancini, one of Mazarin's nieces, and of the Count of Soissons, he was Italian and French: and Louis, by refusing him first preferment in the Church and then a commission, and by exiling his mother[1], threw the young man into the hands of the Emperor. He served brilliantly on the Danube against the Turk, and now began a splendid career of resistance to Louis, who had disgraced his mother and driven him out, and had sneered at the 'little Abbé'; no wonder if Prince Eugene cherished feelings of the bitterest resentment against him. The Prince, leaving half his force to check Catinat, carried the war over the frontier: welcomed and guided by the mountain-protestants, he descended the Durance, and inflicted sharp losses on Dauphiny, sacking Embrun and Gap, and threatening the Rhone. But Eugene was ill-seconded, and did not succeed in making good his footing. After alarming all

[1] Compromised in the Brinvilliers' poisonings, and under suspicion of sorcery.

the kingdom by this audacious raid, he fell back safely into Piedmont.

Affairs on the Rhine were unimportant: Lorges crossed that river, won some small advantages, ravaged Swabia. In Catalonia nothing was done: on the other hand, the expedition of French refugees from England, which was to effect a landing on the French shores, failed completely. The Emperor having thoroughly defeated the Turks, made peace with them this year, and this set his hands free to cope with Louis. On the whole, the end of 1692 saw the hostile forces fairly balanced: though France won most laurels, she was losing strength more rapidly than her antagonists. There was no sign of dissolution about the League: its chief members, the English King and the Emperor, were stronger than ever. There was great distress in France, and deep discontent; the brood of political pamphlets grew with amazing rapidity; the refugees of 1685 avenged themselves on the King and his court with bitter satires; the land was full of beggary; bad harvests threatened famine and ruin; the miserable peasantry made a kind of servile Jacquerie on the roads and in the woods. Finance was in scandalous confusion, and pressed ever harder on the industry and capital of the realm: 'France was perishing of misery to the sound of the Te Deum,' says Voltaire. At last Louis made offers of peace; but the allies felt themselves so strong, that they refused to treat.

The campaign of 1693 followed. This year Louis proposed to reduce Liège, and take Brussels. With one army under Boufflers, Liège should be invested; another under Luxemburg was instructed to cover the besieging force, as in the previous year at Namur. But these armies, thanks to the exhaustion of France, were not in the field till June, and William had time to strengthen all defences, and to set afoot a fine relieving army. Luxemburg would have brought all to the issue of a battle, and had a decided preponderance in force and position: once more Louis could not be persuaded to fight; again he shrank from a pitched battle, and allowed that he was overmatched.

He broke up, and returned to Versailles, nor did he ever again appear with his armies in the field, though he was as assiduous as ever on the parade-ground: his foes with a sneer styled him 'the King of reviews.' This abandonment of all his plans aroused universal amazement: William of Orange had proved too strong for him. Though Luxemburg inflicted a severe defeat on William at Neerwinden, after a very hard-fought day, no results followed, except that Charleroi fell to the victors. Luxemburg's indolence, and the exhaustion of his army, which lacked everything, forbade anything decisive in the Netherlands. A third of the French army was now sent to the Rhine: Louis had hopes of victory, conquest, and peace, in Germany. Yet though they had the upper hand in the field, and inflicted great damage on the Rhine lands and the Palatinate, still nothing decisive was achieved. The warfare went on without plan or hope of end.

In Italy the Duke of Savoy failed to take Pinerolo, and was beaten at Marsaglia; Catinat overran all Piedmont.

It was clear that 1693 had brought little prospect of a settlement of the great quarrel. Louis still held out against Europe, still won victories and took cities: but France was terribly exhausted, and the allies held firmly together. The war became defensive in 1694, except in Spain, where Noailles was ordered to push forwards, and make the French hand felt. He obeyed well, defeated the Spaniards at Verges, and took Palamos, Girona, Ostalric, Castel-Tollit; in concert with Tourville he besieged Barcelona; the appearance of a strong fleet under Admiral Russell in the Mediterranean compelled him to desist. The English showed their superiority at sea; they made a weak attempt to land at Brest, and were driven off with loss; they burnt Dieppe, and harassed, without doing much harm, Dunkirk, Havre, and Calais. In the Netherlands the war was altogether insignificant. France was profoundly disheartened: the Venetian ambassador, in October, 1694[1], speaks of their

[1] Quoted by von Ranke, Französische Geschichte, iv. p. 48.

bitterness at finding in that year that they 'had been obliged, through the inequality of their forces, to change the glory of their past active warfare into the dull necessity of defence.' The French began to feel in the end of 1694 that their enemies were too strong for them. At this time too their most considerable general, Luxemburg, died[1]: though he had glaring faults, he belonged also to the first and great school of French warriors; he was unworthily replaced by Villeroy, chosen because he was a favourite, while Catinat was not. Vauban and Catinat alone upheld the old reputation of the army.

The campaigns of 1695 offer but one point of interest: in Savoy diplomacy had taken the place of the sword, with results which did not appear till the following year; Noailles was recalled at his own request from Catalonia, and the Duke of Vendôme, great-grandson of Henry IV and Gabrielle d'Estrées, a brilliant officer of amazing indolence, debauched and of abandoned manners, a man of extraordinary skill in extricating himself from the straits into which he often fell, was appointed to take his place. This year he did nothing in Spain. In Germany the French, as usual, ravaged the Rhine-provinces, but made no impression on the allies.

The war on all sides was languid; no enterprise was shown in attack, no vigour in pushing an advantage: La Fare, writing of 1696, gives us the simple cause: 'Our generals,' he says, 'have ever been so frightened at the Court that the fear of the ruin which would follow failure has arrested them in the moment of success; . . . to please the King, not to benefit the State, was their unlucky object, and in this way of looking at their duty, generals were wellnigh as culpable as ministers[2].'

The one point of interest in 1695 was Namur. In spite of the bravery and energy of Boufflers, who commanded in the place; in spite of Villeroy's tame and tardy attempts, and his bombardment of Brussels as a diversion, in spite of all the ill-directed efforts of France, Coehorn here won a great triumph for the

[1] 4 Jan. 1685.
[2] Mémoires de La Fare, Michaud III. viii. p. 301.

allies. Namur, after a long investment and heavy losses on both sides, capitulated to William III early in September 1695; the operations of the siege in 1692 had been exactly reversed, and the result showed that the superiority in power and vigour had passed over to the allies. The taking of Namur has always been considered to be William's greatest feat in war.

The death of Queen Mary, which took place 28 Dec. 1694, had, it was thought, shaken William's throne: there was much grumbling and illwill, both among the traders harassed by French privateering, and in the country party; the burdens of the war were very heavy. The Court of Versailles, eager to strike a blow at the arch-enemy, and thinking the time well-chosen, once more despatched King James, in February, 1696, to the coast: Jean Bart was ordered to escort him across the Channel; a Jacobite plot was formed in England. The plot however failed utterly; Russell guarded the sea with an English-Dutch fleet, and James returned sadly to S. Germain, having only succeeded in calling out from the English a very strong expression of attachment to the principles of the Revolution.

Things seemed to draw towards an end: Charles XI of Sweden appears on the scene as a mediating power in 1696, though as yet the parties were still far from possible terms. In one quarter Louis had a real success: the negociations with Victor Amadeus went on, and the Duke's price gradually came to be understood. In 1695 the French had allowed him, after a sham siege, to recover Casale, the strong place for the sake of which Richelieu had striven so hard: early in 1696 Pinerolo, the gateway by which the French entered Italy, was also placed in his hands. To detach Victor Amadeus from the alliance Louis felt that he must, if only for a time, recede from the dominant position which France had held in Northern Italy: no sacrifice was too great, if only thereby the compactness of the League could be shaken. Victor was sagacious and prudent, hiding the plans of his ambition under the cloak of weakness and irresolution; he balanced between the parties, and in the end gained from them both. Louis secured the

independence of his Duchy; the allies, at Utrecht, gave him the name of King. At this time Victor recovered not only Casale and Pinerolo, but all Savoy: his little daughter was affianced to the Duke of Burgundy, the Dauphin's eldest son[1]; it was agreed that his envoys should rank with those of crowned heads.

On these large and very favourable conditions the Duke of Savoy passed over to Louis, promising to secure the neutrality of Italy. The alliance was much shaken; Louis was free to throw all his strength into the Netherlands and Spain. Catinat appeared in Flanders; the French had the decided superiority in the beginning of 1697, and it caused no small stir when it was heard that not vigorous warfare but serious negociation and peace-making in earnest was to be the business of the year. William, shaken by the defection of Savoy, overburdened by the war, and anxious as to the temper of England, at last accepted the mediation of Sweden[2]. He was not a little surprised to find that in the main Louis was ready to listen to the terms he proposed: though the French arms were still the stronger on many sides, and though the League was weakened, still the French King's moderation was conspicuous and astonishing. The exhaustion of France was no sufficient clue for the puzzle; for France had long been worn out, and the records of the time do not impress us with the belief that Louis felt much for his people's sufferings. The true key lay in the Spanish succession question. As in 1668 at Aix-la-Chapelle, so now at Ryswick in 1697, the hope of that great inheritance swayed the policy of France.

The Congress was held in a castle belonging to William III at Ryswick, a little town halfway between Delft, where the French envoys lay, and the Hague, which was the headquarters of the allies: it was opened in May 1697. The French ambassador had previously, in an informal way, let it be known that his master

[1] From this union sprang Louis XV.

[2] Charles XI died April 1697; the mediation was however carried on in the name of Charles XII.

was prepared to recognise William as King of England so soon as ever the peace was actually made. This point, the point of honour, once settled, it became clear at once that England and France would have no serious difficulties on other points: the secret conference between Boufflers and Bentinck at the Hague, at which the terms of peace were really arranged, went smoothly and expeditiously. There seemed little to prevent peace being come to between the chief antagonists. With the others things were not quite so easy; Spain and Germany showing a stiff back. The fall of Barcelona, however, after a vigorous siege conducted by Noailles on land and d'Estrées at sea, disposed the Spaniards to come to terms: and now the Emperor and the Empire alone stood out.

On the 20th of September, 1697, the first of the Treaties[1] of Ryswick was signed, between France on the one side, and England, Holland, and Spain on the other; the Emperor and Empire still resisting. The Germans could not hold out long, for they could not carry on the war alone; and William undertook to bend them towards peace.

By this first treaty France (1) ceded to the three allied powers all the places she had won from them by sword or pen since the Peace of Nimwegen; (2) she consented to the garrisoning with Dutch troops of the chief Spanish-Netherland strongholds, as a barrier between Holland and France; (3) Louis recognised William III as King of Great Britain and (4) Anne, second daughter of James II, and spouse of Prince George of Denmark, a staunch Protestant, as heir to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland, to the exclusion of the Catholic branch; and lastly, he promised solemnly to do nothing to abet any plots or cabals against William's throne. James II was not named, Louis refusing to abandon the fallen King; but the engagement made, though not so definite was more extensive, and included not only James, but his son, and all his party.

The group of powers which made this treaty with Louis had good reason to be well satisfied with the result. They seemed

[1] Given in Dumont, Corps Diplomatique VII. Partie ii. p. 399.

to have curbed the great Monarch's ambition: they had wrested from him a recognition of the English Revolution, and an acknowledgment of the interests of Protestantism bound up therewith; they had placed a strong chain of barrier-forts between the United Provinces and their ancient foe.

William at once set himself to induce the Germans to make peace: and this was no easy task. They had done most in the field: the backbone of the fighting-power had been German; William had definitely promised that he would see that Strasburg was restored to the Empire; and, left to himself, would have broken off negotiations with France, when he found that Louis was determined to retain that all-important city. As neither England nor Holland would support William in this step, he had to acquiesce, and, as best he could, to persuade the Germans also to acquiesce. At last they came in, and the second Treaty of Ryswick, between France, the Emperor and the Princes of the Empire, was signed on Oct. 30, 1697. Even with the loss of Strasburg, this treaty also was a vast gain to the allies. For (1) France ceded all towns taken since the Peace of Nimwegen, except Strasburg; (2) she withdrew from all her positions on the right bank of the Rhine, giving up Freiburg, Breisach, and Philipsburg; (3) she restored Lorraine to the young Duke Leopold, retaining only Saarlouis; (4) she abandoned her candidate for the Electorate of Cologne, and (5) accepted a sum of money in lieu of the claims of the Duchess of Orleans to the Palatinate. To secure Alsace Louis, having lost Breisach on the German shore of the Rhine, at once built a new Breisach, on the Alsatian side of the river: Vauban furnished the plans for its fortification.

The French Huguenot refugees were not restored to their country. Louis would not even hear of their being allowed to settle in the Principality of Orange, where they would have been so near the unextinguished Protestantism of the mountains; on the other hand the English Jacobite refugees were not excluded from France, though their power of offence, for the moment, was reduced.

All Europe regarded the Peace of Ryswick as a great triumph for the allies; France applauded it as bringing her much-needed rest, and as another proof of her Monarch's moderation and greatness: he had stood out, his panegyrists declared, often victorious, against all Europe in arms; and now in the end, after gloriously exalting the French name, had modestly withdrawn from war, to betake himself to the still nobler task of staunching his country's wounds in peace.

The true motive of the peace, which made the King accept losses and such unfavourable terms, was the fact that the Spanish succession question was now at last becoming imminent; Louis saw his way to the whole prize, on which his eyes had so long been fixed. To secure it, he needed peace with England and Germany, and with Spain herself; such a peace would open the door to negotiation, to delusive partition-treaties: with these he would amuse and paralyse Europe, while at the right moment his hands would be free to seize the great inheritance.

And this is why he made this unfavourable peace: deeming its losses as nothing by the side of the vast aggrandisement which the Spanish succession would bring him. Time shewed him wrong; his greatest triumph, the accession of his grandson Philip to the throne of Madrid brought with it no real strength to France.

His medallists struck for him a coin with the legend 'Bello Per Decennium Feliciter Gesto,' and the proud figure of France trampling on the shields of Spain and the Empire, England and Holland; he could boast on another medal of three hundred and fifty cities taken by his arms between 1643 and 1697. On the other side the ingenious engravers were equally busy: one medal among many deserves a passing notice. On the one side is William III with his titles, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland; on the reverse a Hercules beats down the Irish rebels, while the French in the back-ground take to panic-stricken flight; the legend, in scornful defiance of the 'Nec Pluribus Impar' of Louis, is 'Plures Impares Uni':—William,

alone, is more than a match for Louis and his allies: William is fated to destroy the pride of him who boasted that he alone was not unequal to the many. This idea runs through William's life: the Peace of Ryswick seems, at first sight, to justify his boast. The sun of France stands still at last: the onward movement of his triumph is arrested, and Europe breathes more freely. In fact the Monarch only rests once more in order to gather strength for a last great effort. The seventeenth century closes in peace: but the Succession War which opens the eighteenth will soon prove to Europe that Louis XIV has abandoned none of his vast designs.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION. A.D. 1697–1700.

THE question of the succession to the Spanish throne is the thread which runs through the whole reign of Louis XIV; without it we fail to understand many things; if we keep it in mind, we shall find it a clue to the inner politics of the age. When Voltaire denies that the Spanish Succession had anything to do with the Peace of Ryswick [1], he thinks to prove his point by Torcy's Memoirs [2]; he attributes all to the King's moderation and to his desire to solace the distress of France. The truth is that Louis required leisure to carry out his plans. He was engaged in a deep plot, of which the chief agents at home were his Jesuit confessors, La Chaise and Le Tellier, while abroad it was managed by the Marquis of Torcy and Harcourt. It was a plot to deceive all Europe; for while Louis openly renounced the succession in favour of the little heir to the Bavarian Electorate, he secretly determined to secure it to himself through the Spanish patriotic horror at a partition. The faith of treaties was as water before the claim of dynastic interests and the glory of giving a sovereign to the throne of Spain. Louis was fully aware of all the intrigues going on; his amazement at the result, his long and careful deliberations

[1] Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 191 (ed. Louandre).

[2] The Marquis of Torcy, the King's foreign minister, who held in his hands all the threads, was a consummate diplomatist. The publication of the 'Correspondence inédite du Marquis d'Harcourt,' by C. Hippeau, makes Torcy prove himself a liar by business. His letters prove the exact opposite to what he affirms in his Memoirs.

before he would accept what he had himself prepared; his great professions of moderation were a mere comedy, played skilfully enough before the eyes of Europe, but paid for at last by the disasters of the Succession War.

Louis was perhaps all the more eager for the Spanish inheritance because at the very moment of the negociations of Ryswick he had in another quarter suffered a severe check. The influence of France on Poland had long ago been seen to be very powerful: now, however, the time seemed to have come for a new and closer connexion, and for the renewal of those dynastic relations which had been so rudely broken when in 1574 Henry of Anjou slipped away from Poland to become Henry III of France. In 1696 John Sobieski, King of Poland, had died after a brilliant reign, and the nobles were convoked as usual to elect a successor. Sobieski had always favoured France, being wedded to a French wife; and he had endeavoured in vain to make the crown hereditary. Consequently, at his death the nobles were divided between a French party, which seemed to aim at carrying out his views, and a party which perhaps deemed itself the more patriotic, leaning towards a neighbouring prince, the Elector of Saxony, Augustus Frederick. The question really was, Should French influences prevail, and the King of Poland be their exponent against North Germans and Russians? Should their King be dependent on France, hostile to Peter the Great and Prussia, and allied with Charles XII[1]?

The French had a good candidate for the throne: if he must be a foreigner, who so brilliant as the soldier who had fought at Steenkirk and Neerwinden, the Prince of Conti, nephew of the Great Condé? It is true that the ill-will or jealousy of Louis XIV had never allowed him to hold high command: but all knew that he was an able man, and that he had in him his uncle's dash and fire of war, together with a winning and imposing address and person, as became a great Bourbon. At first all seemed to prosper with his suit for the Polish crown.

[1] He came to the throne in 1697.

The Abbé Polignac[1], the French envoy at Warsaw, skilfully managed his affairs, and secured him a majority in the Diet (1697); Louis Francis, Prince of Conti, was proclaimed King by the Primate of Poland. But the minority were not pleased to yield: they elected as their King Augustus of Saxony, who, being a neighbour; and free with bribes, pleased them well. His troops were on the spot, and he entered at once into possession. When Conti, feebly supported by France, arrived at Danzig, he was not even received or acknowledged, and had to return home discredited. It was a sore blow to the pride of Louis, who, little as he liked Conti, wished greatly to appear before Europe as disposer of that distant Crown.

No war in the North followed this divided election; the Peace of Ryswick gave tranquillity to western Europe; and Prince Eugene's great victory at Zenta (Sept. 1697) over the Turks led on to that Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699, which at last seemed to abase the pride of the Mahomedans, and extended the blessings of peace to the East. This treaty was a triumph for Russia; it gave her a firm footing by the Black Sea, and formed the starting-point of her career in those waters, just as by the founding of S. Petersburg in 1703 she was shortly to establish herself as a maritime and European power on the Baltic. It was also a blow to French interests, which were ever pleased to see the Turks on the Danube, harassing and menacing the Empire at its heart.

Thus the century was about to close in profound peace; and all the world looked forward to halcyon days at last.

Yet they were not days of idleness: Charles II of Spain was likely to die at any hour; he had been given over by his physicians, but had recovered, more than once; it was high

[1] Melchior of Polignac, of a noble family of Languedoc, gets his name of Polignac from *Apolliniacum*, the castle of Sidonius Apollinaris. This Abbé was of unusual skill as a diplomatist, and though twice in disfavour at Paris (now, and after the King's death, when he went with the natural sons against Philip), became a Cardinal, and was long a brilliant figure as French Minister at Rome. One of his most remarkable achievements was a long Latin poem, the Anti-Lucretius, written as a refutation of the Latin poet's philosophy.

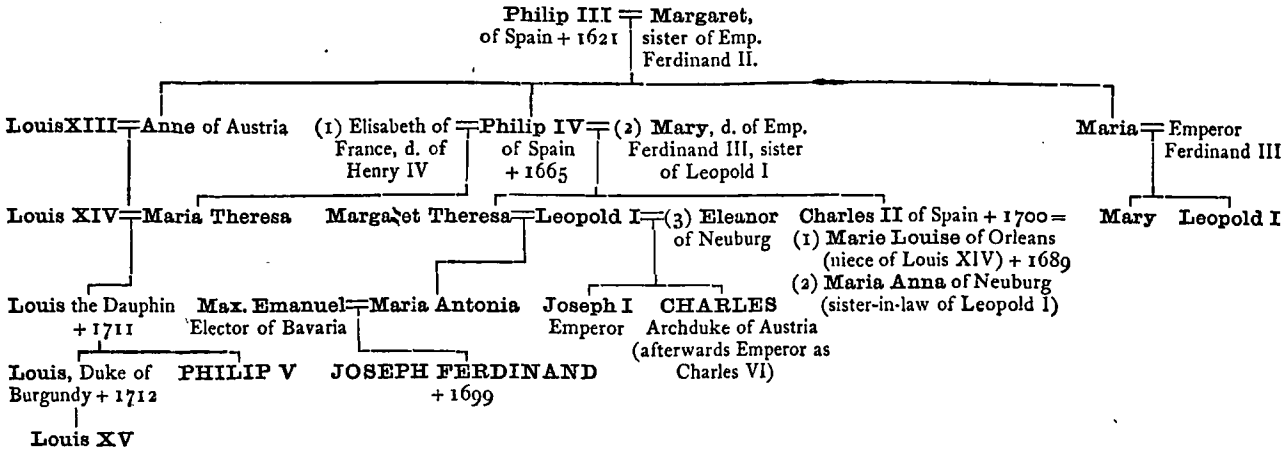
time that the succession-question should be settled. So things which had been left to slumber since 1668 were roused again; and Europe sat down to play a game of skill and intrigue, in which the prize was the Spanish Crown and the great possessions that went with it.

At first there were four possible heirs: the House of Austria, the House of Bourbon, the young Electoral-Prince of Bavaria [1], and last (and without importance) the King of Portugal, who would gladly have made the whole peninsula one kingdom. Austria and France aimed at the whole inheritance; the King of Portugal would doubtless have been satisfied with Spain and a portion of the Colonial Empire: the Bavarian Prince represented those who were in favour of a partition of the vast inheritance, a solution supported by William III, who wished to lay down the basis of such a division as all the claimants might agree to, and such as might make war unnecessary. It was a praiseworthy attempt; and it takes little from the wisdom of the English King's views when we have to confess that he became the dupe of the unscrupulous falseness of Louis XIV.

In 1668 Louis and Leopold, both young princes, had been friends, and had agreed with apparent sincerity to a treaty of partition [2], which had great influence on the conclusion of the Peace of Aix la Chapelle. Now they were both men long past their prime; and thirty years had wrought great changes. In 1668 the Emperor had been childless; in 1698 his daughter Maria Antonia [3] had a son Joseph Ferdinand, and by his second wife Eleanor of Neuburg (sister of the second wife of Charles II of Spain), he had himself two sons, Joseph, destined for the Imperial throne, and the Archduke Charles [4]. Moreover, long wars and the spectacle of the all-devouring ambition of Louis XIV had turned the friendship of 1668 into bitter enmity. In 1668 Leopold had recognised the French plea that

[1] See Table V, p. 276. [2] See above, p. 170.
[3] Married to the Elector of Bavaria in 1685.
[4] Afterwards the Emperor Charles VI, the father of the great Maria Theresa.

TABLE V.—RELATIONSHIPS OF THE THREE CLAIMANTS FOR THE CROWN AND HERITAGE OF SPAIN. A.D. 1698–1700.


Philip III of Spain + 1621
Margaret, sister of Emp. Ferdinand II.
Louis XIII
Anne of Austria
(1) Elisabeth of France, d. of Henry IV
Philip IV of Spain + 1665
(2) Mary, d. of Emp. Ferdinand III, sister of Leopold I
Maria
Emperor Ferdinand III
Louis XIV
Maria Theresa
Margaret Theresa
Leopold I
(3) Eleanor of Neuburg
Charles II of Spain + 1700 =
(1) Marie Louise of Orleans (niece of Louis XIV) + 1689
(2) Maria Anna of Neuburg (sister-in-law of Leopold I)
Mary
Leopold I
Louis the Dauphin + 1711
Max. Emanuel Elector of Bavaria
Maria Antonia
Joseph I Emperor
CHARLES Archduke of Austria (afterwards Emperor as Charles VI)
Louis, Duke of Burgundy + 1712
PHILIP V
JOSEPH FERDINAND + 1699
Louis XV

Whence it appears (1) that Charles II of Spain not only had no offspring, but had no male cousins of his own, except Leopold I;
(2) that his half-sister, the elder, married Louis XIV, his own sister, the younger, married Leopold I.
(3) that Philip, afterwards King of Spain, was great-grandson of Philip IV, and grand-nephew of Charles II, by the female line; while of the other claimants, Joseph Ferdinand was his niece's son, and the Archduke Charles (afterwards the Emperor Charles VI) was only a distant blood-relation, being the grandson of Maria of Spain, who was aunt of Charles II.

the well-known 'renunciations[1]' were invalid; now no one so strict as he in insisting on them, and in endeavouring to tie Louis XIV by them. He had actually compelled his own daughter, Maria Antonia, when he gave her to the Elector of Bavaria, to renounce all her claims on Spain through her mother Margaret Theresa, younger daughter of Philip IV. Thus in his eyes both the daughters of Philip IV had lost their rights to the Spanish heritage, while Charles II was childless: Anne of Austria, when she married Louis XIII had also renounced her claims; and was thereby, according to this view, also barred from the succession. There remained, then, only Maria, the younger daughter of Philip III, Leopold's mother. She had abandoned nothing, her rights were intact: with a touching belief in strict legality (a belief which comes out again in the passionate efforts of his son Charles VI to secure his 'Pragmatic Sanction,' as if a paper obligation could arrest the movement of the world), Leopold concluded that there could be no doubt as to his right to be sole heir of Spain. He proposed to hand over this grand inheritance, when it fell in, to his second son, the Archduke Charles. As, however, Louis XIV, repudiating the renunciations of both his mother and his spouse[2], also claimed the same inheritance, there arose an inevitable quarrel between the Emperor and the King of France, which seemed only to await the death of the Spanish Monarch before it broke forth into a renewed struggle in Europe.

That Spanish Monarch had also views of his own. He held that the voluntary renunciations of Anne of Austria and Maria Theresa were valid, and that the French house was thereby excluded; but that the renunciation exacted by Leopold from his daughter without the consent of Spain could in no way bind him. He therefore regarded all other claimants, French

[1] See p. 165.

[2] (1) Because the Dowry was never paid; (2) On the plea that the renunciation of the parent cannot bind the unborn children. See C. Hippeau's Avénement des Bourbons au trone d'Espagne, i. p. xlvi; Mémoire et Instruction du Roi Louis XIV.

or Austrians, as barred, and adopted as his heir the little Electoral-Prince of Bavaria, Joseph Ferdinand, making a solemn will in his favour. The Emperor's influence was strong enough at Madrid to get that testament annulled; and having won this triumph, by the agency of his ambassador, Count Harrach, and by the friendly disposition of the Queen of Spain, he hoped for yet farther success, and pressed the Spanish Court to recognise the Archduke Charles as heir presumptive, and to allow him to appear as such at Madrid. This Charles II hesitated to do: for in his heart he still clung to the little Bavarian prince. French influences, on the other hand, were very low at the Court of Madrid.

This state of affairs had had much to do with the conclusion of the Peace of Ryswick. So long as the war went on, the Dutch and English were anxious that the Archduke Charles should enter Catalonia, which was full of German troops; and they had offered to the Emperor to lend him ships of war for his son's safe conduct into Spain. After the peace this offer was, of course, withdrawn, and the immediate peril passed by; for had Charles II dropped out of the world, while the Archduke was either in Catalonia or at Madrid, the chances of France would have been poor indeed.

Peace made, Louis chose the Marquis d'Harcourt, the best agent who could have represented him to go to Madrid; he furnished him with an admirable paper of instructions, in which every contingency was foreseen and provided for. Unscrupulous and false as the King's course at this time was, no one can deny that he showed unusual sagacity in his choice of instruments, his clear view of the question, and the ability with which he directed his course towards his one object.

Torcy in his memoirs, and Voltaire following him, describe the circumstances connected with the eventual Spanish will of 1700 as having fallen like a thunder-clap out of a serene sky on the French court; one might believe from them that it found the King unprepared for it, that it was a great anxiety and embarrassment to him, that he accepted it reluctantly and after

very serious deliberations. The truth is just the reverse. It had been before the eyes of Louis for years, as the central ambition of his reign; in making war or peace it ever held the first place, and was never allowed to drop out of sight; once and again the King affirmed that he was determined to sustain his just rights: in the last three years of the life of Charles II it became the main object of all French diplomacy. The correspondence which passed between Louis and the Marquis d'Harcourt shows this at every turn; each point is carefully watched, each contingency provided for. It would be idle to say that, when at last success crowned the efforts of France, in this most skilful of all diplomatic games, Louis XIV was innocently astonished at so great a stroke of fortune, and had to make up his mind whether he should accept or refuse the inheritance. There can be no doubt that from the beginning of these three years Louis not only meant to seize the succession, if he possibly could, but that he was prepared to sanction any steps to bring it about, and to run the risks of a great European war rather than forego the prize[1].

The state of affairs at Madrid was this: the King of Portugal was regarded as entirely out of the field; the Electoral-Prince of Bavaria was also scarcely considered to be a formidable competitor; the struggle lay between Austria and France. The feeble King himself was inclined towards the Electoral-Prince; though his personal feeling could not count for much: his Queen, Maria Anna of Neuburg, was altogether favourable to her brother-in-law the Emperor Leopold, and was supported in this by a strong Court-party headed by the Amirante of Castile, the Duke of Rioseco and the Count of Aguilar. As is usual with such Courts there was a Queen's party and a party of her antagonists: these latter were headed by the Cardinal Puerto-Carrero and the

[1] As we see from his Memoir for the Marquis d'Harcourt, written at the end of 1697 (Hippeau, Avénement des Bourbons en Espagne, I. lxiii): ... 'De soutenir les droits de monseigneur le Dauphin. Le dernier parti rallumerait certainement la guerre dans toute l'Europe, et les puissances de la ligue réuniraient bientôt pour empêcher sa Majesté de recueillir une aussi grande succession.'

Duke of Montalto, both of them 'strong Austrians' in sympathy, though they also had some Spanish feeling. There were, besides, one or two thorough Spaniards, who cared little for the Court-parties and something for their country; and, of course, a fair proportion of trimmers, who waited to see how things might go. French party at Court there was none. In the country, however, and everywhere outside the Court circle, there was an ever-growing conviction that the integrity of the monarchy must be preserved, and that this could be accomplished only by close alliance and union with France. This turn of public opinion, due in large part to Torcy's ability as Foreign Secretary, was much fanned and fostered by a national hatred of the Germans, and by the jealousy which true Spaniards felt when they saw with what exclusive favour the Queen's circle treated all her countrymen.

To handle these parties in masterly fashion, to strengthen the popular feeling for France, to create a French party among the Hidalgos, to keep watch over the movements of the King, who could be chosen better than the Marquis d'Harcourt? He was at once supple and tenacious, lively, brilliant, yet sagacious and firm, a man too who, as Saint-Simon maliciously says, 'could on the slightest necessity become the very soul of falseness[1].' At the end of 1697 he was chosen as Ambassador to the Spanish Court, set off at once, and was there in February 1698. Could he but make his footing good at Madrid, he was the very man to please and enliven a weary and dreary Court. His mission is among the epochs of history; for he not only achieved a great diplomatic success, but actually, in large part, changed the whole current of Spanish feeling, which since the time of Ferdinand the Catholic had been intensely hostile to France. The growth and wane of national antipathies in modern times forms a fine subject for the student in history: Harcourt's embassy gives an admirable picture of the way in which such popular changes come, and of the great effects which may be made to flow from them.

[1] Saint-Simon, ii. pp. 329, 330.

At first the French Minister had no easy task. For seven weeks after he reached Madrid, the King, on one excuse or another, refused to see him; the grandees for a long time would not call on him; the temper of the Court was most hostile. But he neither lost patience nor wasted time: he showed profuse splendour, far exceeding his official and private income; he made friends with all who came near him[1]; he marshalled his host of spies and informers, chiefly monks, through whose kind help little presents, tasteful 'bijoux de France' and pretty trifles, found their way to ladies' boudoirs. He even condescended to execute commissions for the Queen of Spain; though that ambitious lady would not give him audience, she still asked him to get her ribbons, silk stockings, and perruques, from Paris[2]; the vanity of the woman overcame the antipathies of the Queen; the German then, as often afterwards, yearned for the taste of France while she hated its politics. Harcourt also did his best to learn Spanish, though his progress was not rapid; it is singular that so great a diplomatist, even though he was a Frenchman, should at such a critical moment have known nothing of the language of Spain.

During this same period of waiting Louis had ordered Tallard, his minister at S. James, to sound William III as to his views on the succession: and the first scheme for a Partition-Treaty was set afoot. This Partition presented to the mind of William the only escape out of the difficulties of the position which did not involve a great European war: and for that England, as he knew, was not prepared. It may seem strange that Louis should thus have Harcourt at Madrid intriguing for the whole succession, while he set Tallard at London to treat for an amicable division of the spoil. The truth is that the Partition-scheme was a blind, under cover of which the other plan could go on quietly; and at the worst, if nothing else, it kept the Archduke, the formid-

[1] Curiously enough, one of the first ladies of note who became his friend was the wife of the Constable Colonna, Maria Mancini, that piece of Mazarin whom Louis XIV had wished to marry in 1660.

[2] Hippeau, i. p. lxxxvi, in a letter from Harcourt dated 6 Apr. 1698.

able competitor, out of Spain, and secured for France certain substantive gains. Moreover, Louis knew that any proposal for partition must be most hateful to the Spaniards, that the fear of it would set them thinking, that they would ask who could best secure the great inheritance intact. If Harcourt played his cards well and made it clear to the Spaniards that, first, a French prince meant an unbroken kingdom, and secondly, that France wished only to defend, not to subdue Spain, Louis had good hopes that Spanish opinion, already friendly, would become so strong as to compel the Court to abandon its German prepossessions, and to accept the young Duke of Anjou as sole successor to the throne. The Partition-treaties were in fact part of a pretty game played skilfully by the French King, to quiet and delude England and Holland, to paralyse the Emperor, and to incline the Spaniards towards the French interests.

Meanwhile the long-desired audience took place, in the middle of April, 1698; and in the following month Harcourt was able to play an admirable stroke. The Moors were pressing Oran and Ceuta hard, and he offered to place French galleys at the disposal of the Spanish Court for the relief of those important points. The German influence, headed by Anne of Neuburg, in spite of the wishes of the majority of the Council and of the unanimous desire of the Spanish people, carried the day, and the offer was declined. Nothing could have better served the interests of France: the Spaniards outside the Court were furious, declaring loudly that the German party was utterly indifferent to the welfare of the country: that great dignitary Cardinal Puerto-Carrero, Archbishop of Toledo, henceforth began to favour the French side; the two Harrachs, the Emperor's ministers, were harsh and overbearing; even the Queen chafed under their dictation; they had the folly to pronounce openly against her, while the King on his side became weary of her power.

At this time arrived at Madrid a great diplomatist, of the Father Joseph type, but a Jesuit, the Father de la Blandinière: he became the centre of a network of intrigue, with clerical

spies and informers on every hand: he greatly advanced the interests of France. The Spanish and French Jesuits worked heartily together; and now, to crown the popularity of the Ambassador, the Marquise d'Harcourt also arrived, and carried all the ladies of the Court by storm[1]: never was there so charming or so brilliant a pair, so polite, so profuse in gifts. The Spanish ladies who hated the German Queen and her German favourite, Perleps, gave fêtes to Madame d'Harcourt which were so many demonstrations against the German party. Meanwhile the Austrian ambassadors continued to mismanage their affairs with extraordinary grossness and folly.

On the other side, things had advanced so far with the Anglo-Dutch negociations, that the First Partition Treaty was actually signed at the Hague on the 10th of October, 1698. The Dauphin, on the death of Charles II, was to have the Tuscan Ports with Finale, Guipuscoa, San Sebastian, and Fuentarabia; the Archduke Charles to have Milan and Luxemburg; the Electoral-Prince Joseph Ferdinand was to become King of Spain and to have all the rest of the Spanish territories: the Dauphin, for himself and his heirs, made a fresh renunciation of all his claims. The Emperor was not informed of this Treaty, and it was to be kept secret: but who imagined that this could be possible? It very soon became known at Madrid, and Charles II thereon made a fresh will in favour of the Electoral-Prince, who was now but seven years old. Harcourt had been instructed not to oppose this[2]; Louis regarding the Archduke's opposition as far more serious than that of the little Prince and his father the Elector of Bavaria; moreover, the life of a child is proverbially insecure. So things went on till early in 1699, when the child fell ill and died. Small-pox, they said it was: but the wise ones shook their heads, and whispered Poison: some were sure that the Imperial Court had done it, for the Archduke's interest lay that way; others have been as positive that Louis XIV was

[1] 'Sa présence ici,' said de la Blandinière, 'fait mille biens.'
[2] Hippeau, i. 257.

the virtual murderer: solid proof of either is wanting. But for this child's death, by natural causes we would fain believe, the whole question of the Succession might have been amicably settled[1], and Europe saved from a long and wearing war. The whole affair had now to be reopened: Louis at once declared against the substitution of the Elector of Bavaria in place of his son, and put forth fresh and much larger claims: these William III and Heinsius resisted strenuously, and after much deliberation a second Partition-Treaty was signed in London just a year after the death of the little Prince, which had virtually annulled the first. Now France was to receive Milan, and to hand it over to the Duke of Lorraine, in exchange for his claims to his own territory of Lorraine and Bar; she also retained the Tuscan ports and Finale, together with some important places on the Roussillon frontier: the Archduke was substituted for the Electoral-Prince as future King of Spain, with the Indies and the Spanish Netherlands. William III hoped that the Emperor would accept a Partition which secured almost all for his son; but the proverbial Austrian obstinacy could not be shaken, and Leopold refused it altogether.

The effect of this second treaty on Spain was very considerable: vehement irritation sprang up against England and Holland, which were regarded as the authors of it. Many of the grandees did not hesitate to approve of the conduct of the French King, and to declare that this Partition must at last open the eyes of the Spanish nation to its peril[2]. And it did so: from the moment this second treaty was known in Spain, French influences became supreme; the Duke of Anjou's name was in every mouth. The Bavarian party all went over to the French side; the odious favourite Perleps fell, the Queen's position seemed untenable: she even made overtures —doubtless insincere ones—to Harcourt. That able minister, feeling his work done in Spain, and seeing that his continued

[1] L. von Ranke thinks so: History of England, v. p. 163 (English Translation).
[2] Hippeau, ii. p. 233.

presence might seem to hint at dictation, offensive to proud Castilian natures, obtained leave, in April 1700, to withdraw into France, leaving behind him Blécourt, to watch affairs and report. The King at once gave him the command of a force, collected about Bayonne, and instructed him to be ready to enter Spain at its head, if it became needful, on the death of Charles II, to use force in order to secure the succession of the Duke of Anjou. If it turned out that the Spanish King's last will was in favour of France, there might still be some resistance to overcome; if on the other hand Charles II named the Archduke as his heir, Harcourt was to resist the entry of the Austrian Prince into Madrid. It was thought at Versailles that the feeling in Spain in favour of Anjou and the unbroken inheritance was so strong that Harcourt need only show himself to carry all before him. At last even Charles II himself began to incline towards the French side; he was persuaded to send to Rome for advice; and received a letter[1] from Pope Innocent XII, urging him to secure the unity of the whole Spanish realm: and though the Pope does not actually say that this must be by naming the Duke of Anjou as his successor, he leaves it to be clearly inferred. These last months of the King's life were one long agony: he had never had a moment's health all his days, and now his state was piteous. In him, a feeble soul in a decrepit body, the great dynasty of Ferdinand the Catholic was slowly coming to an end, amidst abject fears of sorcery (for Charles firmly believed that both he and his spouse were bewitched), miserable political and social intrigues; he dreaded the violent temper of his unhappy wife, and was under the terrors of a narrowly religious nature: it is characteristic of him that the argument which swayed him most towards the final will was that of one of his courtiers whom he consulted: 'Sire,' he replied, 'when our Lord was near his end He said, Of those whom thou hast given me have I lost none[2].'

[1] Dated 6 July 1700, given in Hippeau, ii. p. 233.
[2] Mémoires secrets du Marquis de Louville, p. 99.

At last, on the 21st of October, 1700, Cardinal Puerto-Carrero finally triumphed, and the Will, naming the Duke of Anjou sole heir to the grand inheritance, was signed by the dying King; on the 1st of November the poor creature closed his eyes: the Will was opened, and its contents declared amidst universal rejoicing.

Would the King of France accept the Will, with all its perils, for his grandson, or would he remain faithful to his Partition-Treaty? This was the question which at once agitated all Europe: and Louis seems to have thought it decorous, though his mind was fully made up, to play the comedy of indecision, to hold a council at Fontainebleau[1], to listen gravely to arguments for and against, to take time for consideration, to announce his final judgment with dramatic effect. The argument which really was decisive with him did not appear on the surface. It was for the dynastic glory of his family that he should place this crown on his grandson's brow. 'He had accustomed himself to have no confidence in any but himself, and above all to set his dynastic affections above his country's interests[2]:' and for them he was ready to run every risk.

And doubtless it was a great triumph, and one which deeply modified the relations of Europe. Spain and Austria, whose rulers had married the Latin to the Germanic blood, were now cut clean asunder and for ever; Spain should be taught to lean in her fallen state[3] on her stronger Latin sister; the imperial ambitions of the House of Austria received a fatal blow. Yet that French triumph was bought at the price of a terrible war: the decadence of Spain seems to infect France; henceforth, for the remaining years of the Monarchy, France also steadily loses power.

It was believed, before the death of Charles, that a European war must break out at once; it seemed now as if men were

[1] Described in full by Saint-Simon, ii. pp. 127, sqq.
[2] Hippeau, i. p. cl.
[3] In the days of Ferdinand the Catholic Spain was reckoned to have twenty millions of inhabitants, now she had barely eight.

wrong. William III would readily have gone to war; but the second Partition-Treaty had been very unpopular in England, where it was argued that the great and substantive additions it would have made to the power of France were more dangerous for Europe than the establishment of a French Prince on the Spanish throne could be, considering the solemn assurances given by Louis that the two crowns should ever be absolutely separate and independent.

Opinion in England declared itself strongly in favour of the acceptance of the Will by Louis XIV. William indeed expressed with bitter scorn his view as to the French King's faithlessness: 'I pray you,' he said to Tallard, 'weary not yourself to justify your master's conduct: the most Christian King cannot belie himself; he hath but acted after his wont.' William, however, stood alone; people generally cared little for the breach of faith involved in this frank repudiation of treaty-obligations: in the royal council at Fontainebleau the Chancellor had declared that by keeping faith France 'would become the laughing-stock of her false friends, with better ground than Louis XII or Francis I had been ridiculed for their rare attachment to their solemn faith and positive royal word[1].' The reference to Francis I is curious: if he was a pattern of good faith and royal honour, what was to be expected from his successor? So completely had the faith of treaties become secondary in the mind of Louis to political or dynastic convenience!

In the face of the feeling in the English Parliament William III was powerless: it was hoped that if he could not move, Leopold would be too timid to act vigorously.

Philip of Anjou, now proclaimed King at Paris and Madrid, as Philip V of Spain, was seventeen years old, the younger son of the Dauphin Louis and therefore grandson of Louis XIV: he was a pleasant-looking, amiable youth, with 'an inclination for what is good[2],' but little knowledge. He had been

[1] Saint-Simon, ii. p. 131.

[2] See his grandfather's rather touching letter about him, addressed to

ill brought up, and was both stupid and lazy; one knows the fate of such a prince, and how incompetent he would be to grapple with the dire needs of his adopted country[1]. Harcourt, who was not only a brilliant diplomatist and soldier, but a protégé of Madame de Maintenon, was now made duke and peer, named head of the young King's council, and instructed to attend him to Madrid. Louis entrusted Philip to his safe keeping and sound guidance. A better guardian he could not have chosen; and, so far, the King of France acted wisely; henceforward, he seemed bent on undoing all that he had with such infinite pains achieved. On the 7th of December, 1700, the young King bade farewell to Louis and his other kinsfolk, amid floods of tears[2], and after a tedious winter journey, entered Madrid in safety, amidst the loud and heartfelt plaudits of his new subjects.

No sooner was Philip gone than Louis, in defiance of all his solemn protestations that the two Crowns should never be united, commanded his lawyers to draw up and seal a patent, securing to the Duke of Anjou and his sons all their rights to the French throne[3]. It was the first note which gave alarm to Europe, and made men fear lest their confidence was misplaced. This alarm was increased when it was seen that through the personal character of Philip and his reverence for his grandfather, Louis at once obtained full command over Spain, and treated the government of that country much as if it was but a department of his own affairs.

Men expected war; yet the century ends in peace; and Louis, rewarded for his labours, and for the skilful moderation of the Treaty of Ryswick, seemed to have already effaced the remembrance of that cloud on the brightness of his career. He

Harcourt, in Hippeau, ii. 354: 'Il aime le bien. Il le fera s'il le connoist.'

[1] See the severe letter he received from his grandfather after he had been King two years. Œuvres de Louis XIV, vi. p. 107, ed. 1806.

[2] From a MS. Journal in the British Museum, ed. G. Masson, 1868, p. 22, 'Tous pleurèrent vivement.'

[3] Ibid, p. 24.

stood before Europe as the most powerful prince of the world, whether in his home relations or abroad; and one who looked only on the surface might be tempted to think that this dramatic triumph, with which the seventeenth century closed, was the highest point of the Great Monarch's glories.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION.

A.D. 1701–1713.

THE opening of the eighteenth century saw the Bourbons established on the thrones of France and Spain; lords of Italy, of the Netherlands, of the Spanish Main, they seemed to have no limits to their power; the proud boast 'Nec Pluribus Impar' was justified by the sullen and timorous attitude of all the European powers. In reality the appearance was delusive. The century was not destined to be for France what it became for England and for Prussia, the epoch of their great advance: an age in which England became mistress of India and leader in the world's commerce, and Prussia rose to be a chief European power, laying the foundations of her present dignity as leader of the whole Germanic race. France descends, decade by decade; her institutions languish and decay, and at the end perish; her great and splendid Monarchy at last pays the penalty of Absolutism, and is trampled in the dust by the rising forces of Democracy.

Louis was very far from being so powerful at home as he seemed. France had not recovered from the exhaustion of the last war: her finances were still in confusion, her productive power seemed permanently diminished; since 1660 all incomes had been steadily decreasing, 'those who used to have a thousand livres a year in funds now have no more than five hundred[1]'; it was believed that half the wealth of France had

[1] Le détail de la France, 1695, by Boisguillebert, in Cimber et Danjou, Archives Curieuses, 2me Série, xii. p. 179.

perished. Boisguillebert's Détail de la France, drawn up in 1695, gives us a frightful picture of loss and confusion.

Early in the late war (1693) Fénelon had addressed his famous letter[1] to the King: it drew, even then, a frightful picture of the famished state of France, and attacked the whole course of the Monarch's policy. But how could such an appeal succeed? Madame de Maintenon was on the other side, in fact; and the King seemed to have no feeling for his nation's sufferings. It was by no means the last shaft in the good Archbishop's quiver: about 1699 appeared, with or without his knowledge, his wonderful allegory, the Télémaque, 'at once an epic poem, and a great treatise on morals and politics,' designed to influence for good the hopeful and docile disposition of his pupil the young Duke of Burgundy. The spirit which breathes through this work, a satire of the past, a Utopia for the future, is no doubt narrow; it has little grasp of those more difficult problems of political life, which throughout the eighteenth century press for solution; it would have been better fitted to form the code for a Paraguayan Jesuit-community than to meet the actual needs of France. The virtues of a Greek state, Homeric or Platonic, might be for a while reproduced in absolute isolation; but a central power like France, palpitating to every movement on every border, could never have ruled herself according to the beautiful dreams of the Archbishop of Cambrai. At this point, however, we are dealing with the criticism of the past, rather than with the possible regeneration of France in the future: and it is enough to point out that Fénelon hoped to train his royal pupil to be the very opposite of his grandfather, to love his people, to solace their woes, to avoid war, to refuse unjust aggrandisement. Under the innocent garb of a classical novel, the Télémaque was a terrible criticism and satire on the whole history of the reign of Louis; the amiable author was dismissed from Court, his alarming humanity being too dangerous; the book was seized, and its publication forbidden. Louis pursued the Archbishop with his displeasure to the end; he never

[1] See Martin, Hist. de France, xiv. pp. 186, sqq.

again appeared at Court: his palace at Cambrai was the home of all that was pure and beautiful, all that was disinterested and humane—how could such a man be tolerated at Versailles and Marly, where all was in bad taste and fanatical, all splendid within and recklessly extravagant, while round the palace-gates lay crowds of starving Frenchmen, victims of the great Monarch's glory? Louis, when the Duke of Burgundy died (1712), finding among his papers some of Fénelon's manuscript writings, burnt the obnoxious documents, lest they should contain things reflecting on his career. We know not what works of the Archbishop we have thereby lost.

French writers are now inclined to tell us that it was not the acceptance of the Spanish Will, but the series of rash steps afterwards taken by Louis, that brought on the war. In this they are, partly at least, in the wrong: the occupation of the barrier-fortresses, the commercial measures, the recognition of James III, were doubtless all menaces to Europe; yet they were all parts of a definite policy, which arose out of a sure belief that war must result from the Spanish Will. Harcourt had been withdrawn from diplomacy and set at the head of an army for Spain; he at least was under no illusions, and thought war inevitable; he counselled Louis to grasp all he could before it broke out[1]; and would not be sorry if by so doing he brought the crisis on at once.

It was in harmony with this advice that in February 1701 French troops, by agreement with the Elector of Bavaria[2], the new Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and a warm partisan of Louis, suddenly reinforced the Spanish contingents in the barrier-fortresses. The Dutch troops, far out-numbered, received orders from Amsterdam to withdraw without resistance. Seven first-class places, which in former days had been the

[1] Hippeau, i. p. clviii: 'Si l'on doit avoir la guerre, il vaut mieux que ce soit aujourd'hui que demain.'

[2] By one of the strange turns of the political wheel, the Elector of Bavaria not only himself sided with France, but brought over his brother the Elector of Cologne, that very Clement of Bavaria whose election Louis had so vehemently opposed in 1688. See above, pp. 239, 240.

prizes of long wars, thus fell without the slightest effort into French hands: it was the first proof to Europe of the true significance of the new order of things. Mons, Luxemburg, and Charleroi were among the towns thus occupied: the whole barrier between France and the United Provinces was levelled at a stroke. The Dutch, thus menaced in the most vital point, hastened on their preparations for war. But without England, what could they do? and the peace-party, though the Whigs were recovering strength, was still dominant in Parliament. Louis himself came to their aid: by actual commercial measures, and rumours of other decrees, which made men fear that the Franco-Spanish union would absolutely exclude English and Dutch ships from the Spanish main, he touched the feelings of England in a vital point. If the barrier-towns were the critical matter for Dutch sensitiveness, the interests of commerce roused most excitement in England. This was followed by the seizure of documents (early in 1701) which showed that the French government was engaged in a fresh plot to overthrow William and restore the Stewarts; at last William felt himself strong enough at home to be able to sign at the Hague (Sept. 7, 1701) a great and famous treaty, 'the Grand Alliance,' by which the Emperor, the Dutch, and the English bound themselves to wrest all his newly-acquired advantages from the King of France, to restore the Netherlands' barrier, to conquer the Milanese as an Imperial fief, as well as all the other Italian and Mediterranean possessions of Spain, and to attack and occupy the Spanish Indies. These last, when conquered, should fall to England and Holland, while the Italian acquisitions were to be the prize of the Emperor.

In this same month of September, 1701, James II died at S. Germain; and Louis, carrying out to the full his dynastic sympathies, against the spirit, if not against the very letter, of his engagements, at once recognised his son James as King of England, and allowed him to be proclaimed by the title of James III. It was the one thing needed to enlist the whole force of English opinion on William's side: national pride was

insulted, the religious feelings of the people raised, the interests of all, whether Whigs or Tories, menaced.

Even before the Grand Alliance was thus concluded, a first campaign of the war had taken place in Italy. The Emperor, without waiting for his western allies, had despatched thither his greatest general, Prince Eugene, with thirty thousand fine troops, which were at once pitted against one of the best men France still possessed, the incorruptible Catinat. Violating the neutrality of Venice, Eugene outflanked the French, who would have made his descent into Italy from the mountains very difficult, crossed the Adige and the Po, and catching part of the French army at Carpi, routed it; he thus became complete master of the whole district between the Adige and the Adda. Catinat, out-generaled, was obliged to retreat, ill-supported by the Duke of Savoy, who once more began to play his old double game. Catinat's want of success gave Louis the opportunity of setting over him the empty and presumptuous Villeroy, with orders to engage the Austrians wherever he might find them: and on the 1st of September, against Catinat's sounder advice, Eugene was attacked at Chiari: he defended himself bravely and skilfully, and inflicted a great defeat on the French; all the Mantuan territory, except the capital and Goito, now fell into his hands.

Thus things stood in Italy, when the Grand Alliance of September 1701 was signed, and a general war became inevitable. France, in spite of her misery, had still a huge army: it was reckoned[1] that she could put full two hundred thousand men in the field. But the officers of the old school were gone; those in command were mere agents of the King, who believed that he could dictate campaigns and secure triumphs in his cabinet. No general ventured on any independent step; the great machinery of Louvois existed still, though it was fast going out of gear; there was no money to pay and arm troops, though there had been plenty to waste at Marly; commissions were a matter of purchase, and the

[1] L. von Ranke, Franz. Geschichte, iv. 133, 134.

noble children, who commanded regiments they had bought, knew nothing of war, and brought only profusion and confusion into the camp. 'The men,' says Villars, who was almost the only free-spoken person in France, 'the men are capital, but not the officers: there are whole regiments commanded by no one but a lieutenant[1].' In the Netherlands, where the war was sure to fall heavily, all was in disorder; 'finance, troops, strongholds, all in utmost decay[2].' There were only ten thousand men there, in all; no horses, no guns, no powder: fortifications were hastily patched up, and a huge ditch and rampart drawn from the Meuse to the sea, with redoubts on it at intervals, reminding men of the old Roman walls and limits of Empire: it did not prove of much service in the war. The friendship of the Elector of Bavaria was the key to the French policy in this war: for him France would defend the Spanish Netherlands; by means of him and his brother, the Elector of Cologne, she would penetrate into the heart of Germany, pass from Rhine to Danube, and endeavour to strike a great blow at the very heart of the Austrian power.

There were four chief theatres of war: the Italian, which was rather an episode, the struggle being chiefly for the Milanese, and not in itself vital; the Belgian, for the fortresses; the German, for the Danube; and lastly the Spanish, for the great prize of the war, the Crown of Charles II.

Before war broke out elsewhere, the vigour of Prince Eugene had greatly harassed the French in Italy; early in 1702 his troops entered Mirandola; a daring attempt on Cremona, though crowned with momentary success, failed with considerable loss. The Germans, though they missed the town 'by a quarter of an hour,' as Eugene said[3], carried off the Commander-in-Chief, Villeroy: the song-writers of the day made very merry over the double gain to France of Cremona saved and Villeroy lost[4]. Vendôme was sent to take his place,

[1] Lettres de M. de Villars, ii. p. 173.
[2] Martin, xiv. p. 381.
[3] MS. Journal in the British Museum, pp. 32, 33.
[4] Nouveau Siècle de Louis XIV, pp. 209–216.

'the able, intrepid, good, the amiable Vendôme, the dexterous discoverer of his enemy's schemes, the indiscreet revealer of his own, the affable and indolent[1].' The young King of Spain left Madrid and his wife[2] to see a campaign: he watched Vendôme with singular skill relieving Mantua, and was present at the severe and indecisive battle of Luzzara, in August, which went somewhat in favour of the French and Spaniards. Prince Eugene fell behind the Mincio, the French occupied the Duchy of Modena, as well as Mantua and the Milanese. Nothing of importance took place; the King of Spain went home satisfied with what he had seen.

Long before this date war had begun along the whole line. The death of William III, which took place in March 1702, did not delay matters for an hour, or affect the general course of affairs; he lived still in the mature wisdom of Grand Pensionary Heinsius, and in the warlike genius of Marlborough; and Queen Anne was as ready as he had been to resist the claims of the Catholic branch of the House of Stuart. The great system of resistance to France which he had organised was too firmly fixed in men's hearts and in the needs of the age to suffer much by his untimely death.

Since early in 1701, a French and an Imperial army had observed each other on the Rhine without fighting. The French had the advantage of the strong places belonging to their ally the Elector of Cologne, as well as of the fortresses of Alsace; Tallard with twenty thousand men occupied the Electorate of Trèves and the Duchy of Lorraine. Their forces, in all some five-and-forty thousand, were spread over too broad a surface; and when Catinat, transferred from Italy, took the command, he found himself with a weakened army face to face with the Emperor's generalissimo, Louis of Baden. Catinat, naturally cautious and unenterprising, and hampered by a sense of the dislike for him which reigned at Court,

[1] So says the Prince of Ligne in his bright forgery 'the Memoirs of Prince Eugene,' A. 1702, p. 72 (Eng. Trans.).

[2] He married the daughter of Victor Amadeus II of Savoy late in 1701.

with an unequal and ill-found force, was unable to make use of his great advantages of position: he allowed Louis of Baden to cross the Rhine, and lay siege to Landau. Mélac, who was in command there, made a fine defence, but Catinat could do[1] nothing to relieve him, and in September Landau fell; the Imperialists at once became masters of Alsace.

Just before this the Elector of Bavaria had formally declared war against the Emperor, and had taken Ulm; now Louis of Baden recrossed the Rhine, and seized that strong corner of the world, the angle of the Black Forest mountains, lying between Strasburg and the Danube. Here he threatened the Elector, and proposed to hinder him from joining the French. Catinat seeing the danger of the attempt to penetrate to the Danube, would have done nothing: Villars, however, one of his lieutenant-generals, an ambitious and lively soldier, was instructed by the Court to make the attempt. He crossed the Rhine at Neuburg and at Huningen, leaving Catinat at Strasburg. Before he was well over he found the German infantry awaiting him on a wooded hill at Friedlingen; his men charged boldly and drove them down into the plain; then, smitten with some strange fear, instead of pursuing their advantage, they turned and fled headlong, sweeping Villars with them in their blind panic. He believed the battle lost and himself ruined, and sat in despair, doing nothing to stay the disaster, till one of his officers rushed in with cries of victory; for Magnac who commanded the French cavalry had bravely charged and overthrown the enemy's horse: the French foot rallied, and the Germans drew off in good order, unmolested. Villars, a favourite at Versailles, was made a

[1] French historians condemn Catinat, but do not make sufficient allowance for his difficulties: 'On a fait tout ce qu'on a pu pour sauver Landau. On tint pour cet effet un conseil d'officiers généraux chez M de Catinat pour décidér si l'on tenteroit de forcer les passages de la Lauter pour le secourir. Tous les officiers, à la réserve de M. le Marquis de Villars, furent d'avis de ne le point entreprendre . . . on fit convenir au Marquis que la chose étoit impossible.' MS. Journal in the British Museum, p. 38. Catinat resigned his command after this, alleging ill-health; he was coldly permitted to retire.

Marshal of France as a reward for this absurd victory: nevertheless his campaign was a mere failure; he did not even attempt to penetrate into the Black Forest[1]; Louis of Baden's forces were stronger than his: he had to fall back and recross the Rhine. The year ended without anything decisive on the Rhine and Danube, though by taking Landau the allies had gained more than France had gained by the Bavarian onslaught on Swabia.

The Duke of Burgundy had been sent to the Netherlands to take the command; though he was the nominal general, the true head of the army was Boufflers, one of the few officers who recalled the memories of the older time. He failed to succour Kaiserswerth on the Rhine, which was wrested from the Elector of Cologne and the French. Marlborough arrived in the Low Countries; and though in this campaign he fought no great battles, he took Venloo, Stephanswerth, Ruremonde, and Liège: the French were unable to make head against him; and Boufflers, commanding a weakened and ill-disciplined force, could only save himself from being crushed by abandoning place after place. At sea the English attacked Cadiz in vain; immediately afterwards the Duke of Ormond defeated the French in Vigo Bay, and took or burnt the whole Plate-fleet, which Château-Regnault was convoying home to Spain.

Towards winter began that heroic struggle which raged throughout the earlier period of this war in the south of France. The Huguenots of the Cevennes, descending into the open country, declared war against their oppressors: French troops and miguelets from Roussillon were sent to destroy them: under the heroic guidance of Cavalier[2] and Roland they made unexpected resistance. They had no small influence on the war; for they did much to wear out the strength of France, and to occupy some of her best officers and troops in the time of her greatest need.

[1] The Elector suggested to him, that there was a way through the Black Forest, by the Höllenthal; Villars replied with a joke, 'qu'il n'était pas assez diable pour cela.'

[2] Now only seventeen years of age.

The winter of 1702, 1703, was restless, full of skirmishes and small affairs in the north, wherein Marlborough easily kept the upper hand. He not only secured Holland against attack, but punished the Elector of Cologne by taking Bonn, and occupying all his Archbishopric; the districts still held in the north by the Spaniards or their friends were cleared by him; he took Spanish Gelderland[1], Limburg, and Huy, before the summer, and was far more than a match for Boufflers and Villeroy. Marlborough's campaign of 1703 made his footing quite secure in the Provinces and in Lower Germany, and prepared the way for the great campaign he meditated for the following year. The check which Marshal Boufflers inflicted on the Dutch at Eckeren, not far from Antwerp (30 June, 1703), though it stopped all forward movement of the allies towards the south, had no influence on Marlborough's plans. The French defensive line, drawn from Namur to Antwerp, remained intact; Brabant, Hainault, and Flanders were to be left for the present unmolested.

In Germany the French arms were prosperous in 1703. Villars crossed the Rhine with thirty thousand men, driving back the Imperialists. He took Kehl, opposite Strasburg, and obliged Louis of Baden to fall back to his lines at Stolhofen. Thence, leaving Tallard to watch the Germans, Villars boldly crossed the Black Forest and effected a junction with Maximilian Emanuel, the Elector of Bavaria, at Dutlingen, near the head of the Danube valley. The Elector had already begun to show very considerable gifts of war, vigour and boldness, and a decided power of handling an army and of planning campaigns. His ambition to oppose the neighbouring House of Austria made him a very important ally for Louis XIV, who recognised his value; he was determined to support him warmly, and to use him as a wedge with which to break up the Austrian power. The Elector was one of those three princes whose 'geography prevented them from being men of honour[2]';

[1] The part north of the Rhine was Dutch, south of that river Spanish.
[2] The Prince of Ligne's 'Memoirs of Prince Eugene,' p. 34.

lying as they did between great powers they were obliged to trim and balance. But the Elector of Bavaria, though he chose the French instead of the German side, was staunch to his party, and, if unpatriotic, was never dishonourable.

His territories were destined to be the critical theatre of the war during these years, 1703, 1704. At the time that Villars joined him Maximilian Emanuel had already gained considerable advantages over the Austrians, having defeated them, and occupying in force all the line of the Danube from Ulm to Passau. Villars would gladly have pushed on to Vienna, hoping at once to crush the Austrian power at its source. Prince Eugene is represented as saying to Leopold, 'Your army, Sire, is your monarchy; . . . your capital is a frontier town[1],' and the phrase fairly presents the position of Austria, with her Bavarian foes under the walls of Passau; her Hungarian subjects under Ragoczi in full revolt[2]; her hereditary enemy the Turk threatening her from Belgrade. But the Elector of Bavaria wished first to secure Tirol, and persuaded the French that if he attacked it from the north while Vendôme entered it from the Lago di Garda on the south, that great roadway between Vienna and Milan might be for ever closed against the Emperor. Accordingly Villars was left to hold the Danube valley, while the Elector entered the mountains, and Vendôme came up from Italy. But though the Elector occupied Innspruck, and Vendôme reached Trent, the ruggedness of the country and the unaided bravery of the Tyrolese sharpshooters were too much for them, and they failed to make their junction at the head of the Brenner Pass. Both armies were obliged to retreat, for there were new dangers in their rears. The defection of the Duke of Savoy from the French side threatened Vendôme with ruin; while the Prince of Baden and Styrum, the former from Stolhofen, the latter from Franconia, were rendering Villars'

[1] The Prince of Ligne's 'Memoirs of Prince Eugene,' A. 1703, p. 77.

[2] In 1701 this representative of a great Transylvanian house, which had been dispossessed by Austria, escaped from Vienna to Hungary, and for ten years kept that country independent of her German masters.

position in Bavaria very precarious. Louis of Baden had crossed the Danube at Ulm, had taken Augsburg, and was threatening Munich: if Styrum could join him, Villars might be lost. The Elector, however, returned in time, and in junction with Villars, first drove Louis of Baden back, and then falling on Styrum, who lay on the Upper Danube, defeated him utterly (20 Sept. 1703) at Höchstett. The Prince of Baden, when he left Stolhofen, set free the army which was observing him there. Thereupon Tallard came down to the Rhine with this force, took Old Breisach and laid siege to Landau; he brilliantly defeated a relieving army under the Count of Nassau at Speyer; and then returning quietly continued his siege, till Landau capitulated. With these operations the year 1703 drew to an end, and the old King of France might be well pleased with the fortunes of the war: he had won victories at Höchstatt and Speyer; he had recovered Landau; the Netherland frontier was intact; his ships held their own against the sea-powers. On the other hand, the political changes of the year were not so favourable to him; for it saw the defection of two small but important states, Savoy and Portugal. By the first he lost his hold on Italy, and from this time the German interest predominates in that Peninsula: by the second the throne of Philip V was at once threatened, and Spain became the theatre of critical warfare. While Austria had detached Savoy, it was England that detached Portugal. To the famous Methuen treaty, which brought the Portuguese wines into England, and gave to Port-wine its triumph over French Claret, is due the beginning of that closer friendship which has ever since marked the relations of Portugal and England; to it England owes, in large part, her maritime security in the Mediterranean waters; it was this friendship which made her capture of Gibraltar in 1704 important and permanent.

One other source of deep anxiety affected Louis; and this was perhaps the one he felt most bitterly. The old Huguenot spirit was after all not extinct; and the civil war of the Cevennes with its high spiritual enthusiasm, its romantic heroism, its terrible cruelties and severities, darkens these years,

while it weakens the power of France. The Camisard war took the dimensions of a crusade: all Languedoc was disturbed; the Pope issued indulgences for all who would fight against the heretics; the 'Children of the Cross,' as the Catholic volunteers were styled, emulated the cruelties and ferocity of their predecessors. Villars was withdrawn from foreign service at the end of 1703, and sent down to the south to make head against this formidable insurrection. He had quarrelled with the Elector of Bavaria; Louis doubtless thought this the best way of solving all difficulties between him and his German ally, and Tallard seemed both skilful and lucky.

All these things were very favourable to the allies, and neutralised the advantages won by the French and Bavarians; they encouraged Marlborough to undertake that grand campaign of 1704 on which his fame so largely rests. For with him probably, rather than with Prince Eugene, lies the credit of it[1]. Eugene met the English commander at Mondelsheim near Heilbronn, and measures were there planned between them and Louis of Baden, who, however, was not very friendly with Prince Eugene, and desired to stand aloof from the combined operations with an independent sphere of action. This conference of Heilbronn begins the age of the 'Triumvirate'; Prince Eugene, Marlborough, Heinsius; representing the Empire, England, the Provinces. It is the most splendid epoch of the military history of England. Marlborough was the leading spirit; his English troops had at least a full share of the perils and glories of the war. It is, too, the heroic moment of Marlborough's own career. The plans he now matured had formerly been laid before William III, who had rejected them; he was therefore acting against the opinion of his old master, and his whole fortunes were staked on the cast; opinion in Holland was timid, in England opposed to the venture; he must succeed or fall[2].

[1] So von Ranke holds: 'It was entirely Marlborough's own idea, and at the same time his greatest one, to undertake that unexpected march.' History of England, v. p 320.

[2] Eugene writing to the Duke of Savoy said at this very time: 'Mylord

Bearing his whole fortunes with him, and with the unfaltering resolution and serenity of a great man, Marlborough set out from Holland for this decisive campaign.

The French and Bavarians formed a continuous line from Vosges to Passau, which had now (Jan. 1704) fallen before the Elector's prowess: the Austrian capital was in most imminent peril when Marlborough began to move. With consummate skill he misled Villeroy and Boufflers, leaving five and twenty thousand Dutch troops in a camp near Maestricht to check them and preserve his communications, and with the best of his army he crossed the Rhine at Cologne, and marched up stream; the story ran that he told the Elector of Trèves 'he was going to teach the Germans how to beat the French[1].' Great was the commotion in the French and Bavarian armies: Villeroy marched after Marlborough; Tallard made for the Moselle, then joined Villeroy and threatened the Stolhofen lines, which Prince Eugene undertook to defend; the Elector descended the Danube as far as the Schellenberg near Donauwörth, where he sedulously entrenched himself. Marlborough, unmolested, joined the Prussians and other German troops near Mainz; with them he passed unopposed through the Black Forest, meeting Louis of Baden near Ulm. Thence they marched against the Elector, and in a sanguinary battle stormed his strong lines on the Schellenberg, driving him headlong with his Bavarians across the Danube. Donauwörth became the prize of the allies, who had forced the key of the whole position. This important victory gave no small offence in England, where the heavy losses incident on storming a strong position were felt and resented by those who were ignorant of the strategic and geographical bearings of the stroke. Even after this great success the allies were still in a critical position; they had magazines at Nürnberg and Nördlingen, but nothing in Bavaria except

M. c'est un homme qui a . . . grand envie de faire quelque chose, d'autant plus qu'il serait perdu en Angleterre s'il retourne sans avoir rien fait.' Heller, Correspondence, ii. 182, quoted by von Ranke. Franz. Geschichte, iv. p. 154, note 2.

[1] MS. Journal in the British Museum, p. 73.

Donauwörth. With prudent strategy the French and Bavarians, who were their equals in numbers, and far better off in position and supplies, might have soon wearied them out, and obliged them to break up their combinations. Patience however was just what they lacked: though the Elector of Bavaria at Dillingen was splendidly posted to cut off the supplies from Nördlingen, he would not stay there; Ingoldstadt was threatened by Louis of Baden, and he must needs march down into Bavaria: Tallard and Marsin had courage and presumption, a powerful army, and the choice of positions; they decided on awaiting the allies, and barring their retreat towards the west. Prince Eugene came out from his lines, deluded Villeroy, kept him from joining the main force of French and Bavarians, and by a happy march reached Marlborough just in time. The Elector, Marsin, and Tallard, descending the left bank of the Danube, reached the plain of Höchstett, of good omen as they thought since last year's battle, and there, between Höchstett and the village of Plindtheim or Blenheim, they agreed to strengthen themselves and bar the way to the allies. Marlborough and Prince Eugene wished for nothing better: they rejoiced in the prospect of a battle.

The Danube in this part of its course is already broad and deep; and the plain-land on its left or northern shore is of no great width, being bounded by wooded hills running parallel to the stream; out of these low heights run little rivers, descending through marshy banks at right angles to the Danube. One such rivulet joins the main stream at Höchstett, another, the Nebel, runs in at Blenheim. It was above this latter, from the woods to the Danube, that the French and Bavarians posted themselves awaiting the allies. The Elector of Bavaria had the left wing, round Lützingen, a little village close to the woods; in the centre lay Marsin behind Oberklau, with a small force pushed across the rivulet and occupying Niederklau on the east bank; Tallard had the right wing and had crammed the village of Blenheim full of troops. Their dispositions were faulty in more ways than one; thus, the French were quite separated

from the Bavarians; they all, except Marsin's men in Niederklau, lay too far from the river, on the rising ground, where they could not defend the passage of it, or make full use of the difficulties of the ground; and lastly, too many of their troops (as they found out when too late) were cooped up in Blenheim and the other villages. They numbered, in all, nearly sixty thousand men, with ninety guns; but twenty-six battalions and twelve squadrons in Blenheim, and the troops posted in the other villages, much reduced their available force; and when it came to the push their infantry was far too weak to dispute the allied advance. The allies on their side of the Nebel had about fifty thousand men, and sixty-six guns: Prince Eugene was on the right, with his Imperialists, facing the Elector and Marsin, Marlborough to the left, with the English and Dutch, stretching from the Danube till he touched Eugene's left, having opposite him Marsin and Tallard: through the centre of his position ran the high road which leads from Höchstett to Donauwörth, crossing the Nebel with a bridge, just below which are some water mills on the stream. On the 13th August, 1704, General Cutts began the battle by taking Niederklau and the mills, and clearing away the French from the eastern bank of the little river; after this the English pressed forward, got across the stream and attacked Tallard in front and Blenheim on their left flank. But while Marlborough made good progress here, Prince Eugene, higher up, could make no impression on his opponents: their position was very strong, and all his efforts seemed vain. Towards evening, however, Marlborough after great efforts succeeded in storming Tallard's position, the key of the battle, and separated him from Blenheim, whence his strong reserve, too late, tried to come out to his rescue; the English, however, had got round them and held them firmly there. The action had been chiefly one of artillery and cavalry. Now Tallard himself, being shortsighted, fell in with a troop of English horse, and was made prisoner: his cavalry, having been cut in two by the English, fled in panic; part got safely to Höchstett, while the rest bending to their left and being hard

pressed in the rear by the enemy's horse, came unawares to the Danube, dashed into the stream, and perished almost to a man[1]. When Marlborough turned Tallard's guns on him, Marsin discerned that he was no longer safe, and that he and the Elector must draw off, if they would avoid being surrounded and ruined. They effected their retreat in good condition to the Black Forest; Tallard's army was as good as annihilated. After dark, the regiments in Blenheim, about ten thousand strong, at last convinced that their friends had left the field, capitulated; and the great battle was over. The Germans call it the second battle of Höchstett, but in England it has ever been known as the great battle of Blenheim. It was the worst mishap which had ever befallen Louis XIV: Marlborough stood out as the hero of the day; Prince Eugene was too noble to be annoyed at the fate of war, which threw him into the background. Marlborough's plan of the campaign was more than justified: all Bavaria was at the feet of the allies. The Elector, firm to the falling cause, withdrew into France, whither came also his partner in misfortune, his brother the Elector of Cologne. By this great stroke the Empire was saved, and henceforth the tide of war flowed in other channels. The Margrave Louis of Baden felt himself strong enough to cross the Rhine: everywhere the French fell back; Landau once more changed hands: Marlborough took Trarbach on the Moselle, and threatened Trèves, which afterwards fell: the war drew ominously near to the frontiers of France. Marlborough was created a Duke by Queen Anne, and a Prince of the Empire by the Emperor Leopold.

Early in 1705 Marlborough threatened France from Trèves with a powerful army; Louis of Baden was also to advance through Alsace, and to join the Anglo-Dutch army, under the

[1] Commemorated in an absurd poem of the time (quoted by Macaulay in his Essay on Addison):

> 'Think of two thousand gentlemen at least,
> And each man mounted on his capering beast!
> Into the Danube they were pushed by shoals.'

walls of Metz: after the reduction of that important fortress-city, the allies should penetrate into France, and march on Paris. It is clear that this scheme needed prompt and hearty co-operation; which was just what the Germans would not give: Louis of Baden moved very slowly, not caring much to support the great Duke; and Marlborough was foiled. The insurrection in the Cevennes was now over: by pitiless severities, by leaders broken on the wheel, by villages burnt and destroyed, and troops of Camisards shot down like dogs; then by great promises and offers, not only of pardon but of advancement, Villars had at last overcome the stubborn resistance of these simple peasants. Cavalier, their chief leader, submitted, on condition that the King would enroll the Huguenots in four regiments, and allow them liberty of conscience: Villars promised everything; Cavalier was named colonel of one of these regiments. But he soon discerned that the Court was playing with him, while the Camisards disavowed him and called him renegade and traitor; he therefore escaped into Switzerland, and thence joined the allies. He served with high distinction in the English army, and closed his days as an English general and governor of the Island of Jersey. Villars, having thus closed this wound in the side of France, was at once sent to stem, if possible, the triumphant onward movement of the allies. Enormous efforts had been made to raise men and means; and in Villars' hands they were well used. He posted himself skilfully in a camp at Sierk, whence he could both watch Thionville, Saarlouis, and Metz, and check Marlborough's advance. Unsupported by the Germans,—for Prince Eugene had been once more sent into Italy,—Marlborough did not venture to attack Villars; and finding that Villeroy and the Elector of Bavaria were threatening his communications by besieging Liège, he determined to retreat. He relieved Liège, and drove the French back to Louvain; Villars, on the other hand, moving towards Germany, took Trèves, joined Marsin, who had been observing Louis of Baden, and came down on the Rhine. The Court would not allow him to cross the river: he had hoped to

restore the French fortunes there; but Louis XIV had other plans: he wished, unfortunately for himself, to make the war decisive in the Netherlands, and ordered a large part of Villars' army to reinforce Villeroy, so strengthening the incompetent general at the expense of the ablest man he had in his service.

We are coming to the year 1706, which has been styled, with far more justice than Dryden's 1666, the Annus Mirabilis of English, if not of European History[1]. It clearly is the greatest year of the Succession-war, and we shall do well to regard the incidents of 1705 on the different theatres of action, the German frontier, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain, as leading up to the decisive actions of the following year.

The new position taken up by Portugal in 1703 had entirely changed the face of affairs in the Peninsula. The Archduke Charles, after having been proclaimed King of Spain as Charles III, and recognised by the allies, crossed over to England, and thence sailed, early in 1704, with ten thousand men for Portugal. He landed at Lisbon, where he was joined by a strong Portuguese army. But an attack on Spain from the frontiers of Portugal is no easy matter: the country is difficult, and a resolute enemy can soon bar the way. And the Duke of Berwick, who then commanded for Philip V, was a very capable general: he had in him not a little of the military genius of his uncle the Duke of Marlborough[2]: in these two great soldiers the Churchills have the singular honour of having produced the most formidable antagonist, and the ablest supporter, of the throne of France. The allies were driven back into Portugal. Just at the same time the English fleet under Admiral Rooke, after an abortive attack on Barcelona, suddenly returned, and by a happy inspiration surprised Gibraltar (4th August, 1704), where, with true Spanish negligence, there lay only two hundred men in garrison. This fortuitous success is perhaps the greatest and most permanent advantage

[1] L. von Ranke, History of England, v. p. 322.

[2] He was a natural son of James II and Arabella Churchill, the Duke's sister.

ever won by English arms on the continent of Europe. In vain did the Count of Toulouse, one of the natural sons of Louis XIV, attempt to recover the rock. A fierce sea-fight off Malaga, in which the French fleet of fifty-two ships engaged the Anglo-Dutch navies, which, united, were more numerous though weaker in artillery, ended to the advantage of the French: their adversaries had to draw off, leaving to them the honour of the day. France, however, had not strength to refit her navy and fill up the gaps made by the hard-fought battle: the battered ships were unable to hold the sea, and withdrew to Toulon; henceforth no great French fleet was seen; the supremacy of the waters remained undisputed in the hands of the sea-powers, and Gibraltar was secured to England. In 1705 Charles III set sail from Lisbon, escorted by the British fleet, and landed near Barcelona; for the Aragonese provinces were far more friendly towards him than the Castilian; and his best way to Madrid was from the east, not from the west. Philip V had refused to ratify the old Catalan privileges; the pride of the Catalans was offended, and they gladly threw themselves into the arms of the English and Austrians.

The English agreed to land an army on the Catalan coast: Charles III promised to respect the Catalan Fueros: the meteoric Earl of Peterborough, 'last of the knight-errants,' was sent to take command of the English forces: round so romantic a character romance is sure to cluster, and it is difficult to sift the true from the exaggerated in the narrative of his career in Spain. The inhabitants of Barcelona compelled the garrison to throw open its gates to Charles; the province at once proclaimed him: Valencia and Aragon enthusiastically followed its example; and the fortunes of Philip V seemed to be on the wane. Thus the old divisions of the Spanish kingdoms reappear in full life; the struggle between the supremacy of Castile and the federation of the little kingdoms and provinces, seems, for the moment, likely to reverse the general tendencies of monarchy and to draw towards a more decentralised form of government.

The Castilians, however, could still fight: Philip V in person,

with Marshal Tessé by his side, marched early in 1706 down to Barcelona, and besieged it on the land side, while the Count of Toulouse blockaded the harbour. After the place had well-nigh succumbed, the English fleet appeared; the French, not daring to face them in open sea, sailed away; Barcelona was relieved. Philip hastily broke up the siege, and fled: he could not venture through the hostile districts which lay between him and Madrid, and had to cross the Pyrenees into Roussillon; then, passing through southern France, he re-entered Spain from Bayonne, and so to Madrid. Meanwhile the allies had promptly taken the offensive; from east and west they closed in on Castile; Ruvigny, a French exile commanding an Anglo-Portuguese army, penetrated into Estremadura and threatened Madrid. Philip once more took flight to Burgos; the allies entered Madrid in triumph and proclaimed Charles III in the capital. The campaign of 1706 in Spain seemed for the moment decisive: men expected to see another refugee-monarch taking shelter at Versailles.

In Italy also these years had been disastrous for French interests. Vendôme in 1704 had slowly but steadily restored the fortunes of his master on the Italian slopes of the Alps: Ivrea, Susa, Pinerolo, had been recovered, and Piedmont for the time secured: the Imperialists on the other hand were in full possession of Mantua and the Modenese, and threatened Milan. In 1705 Prince Eugene reappeared on the scene, and roused the lazy Vendômé to unwonted energy; he, in a sharp battle at Cassano, eastward of Milan, defeated the Austrians: Eugene, hearing of the death of Leopold, returned to Vienna, to watch over the course of affairs. Taking advantage of his absence, Vendôme completely defeated the Austrian army (May 1706) at Calcinato, not far north of Mantua, and drove it to the Adige: nothing now, except Turin itself, remained to the Duke of Savoy. While Vendôme on the Adige lay waiting for the Germans from the mountains, a splendid army, commanded by the most incompetent of all the favourite generals of Louis, La Feuillade, young, ignorant, and presumptuous,

invested Turin, with a lofty contempt for all the rules of siege-warfare. The days of Vauban were over: he was sent to meditate on the utter wretchedness of his country, and to express his sense of her hardships in his famous pamphlet on the 'Dixme Royal[1].' At last Eugene returned: with a march bold even to rashness, to be excused only by his well-founded contempt for the indolent slowness of Vendôme and the utter incapacity of La Feuillade, he suddenly crossed the Adige and the Po, and swiftly marched up the right or southern bank of the river towards Turin. At this critical moment Vendôme was recalled by Louis to take the place of Villeroy, who had met with his deserts at Ramillies: the Duke of Orleans, the King's nephew, a man of considerable ability, and Marsin, were sent to take his place in Italy. These changes gave Eugene time to cross the rivers which run into the Po, and to join the Duke of Savoy at Carmagnola. Then he crossed the Po, and contemptuously made a rash flank march in the presence of an enemy immensely superior to him in numbers. Marsin, ordered by the Duke of Orleans to attack, as he ought to have done, produced full powers from Louis XIV, to the Duke's infinite mortification, and refused to move. There was nothing for it but to stand on the defensive; and Prince Eugene wished for nothing better: he had but some thirty-five thousand men, while the French were at least twice as strong, and entrenched. They, however, were in the utmost confusion, and even their strong position, from being too large, turned to their disadvantage. Eugene's vigorous attack was completely successful; Marsin was killed, the French army routed. The Duke of Orleans, who had displayed a bravery and coolness worthy of a better day, ordered a march to Casale: with forces still stronger than the allies, he might there have defended the Milanese, and made Eugene's position perilous, by cutting him off from his communications with Germany. But the French officers and army were utterly frightened: they thought that at Casale they would be cut off

[1] Published in 1707.

from France; and whole regiments took to flight towards Susa and Pinerolo. The great armaments melted away and disappeared. All Italy was in the hands of the victors: Médavy, who had been left by Marsin on the Mincio, had to capitulate in Mantua; the Emperor recovered his authority over the old fiefs of Milan and Mantua, and gave Montferrat to the Duke of Savoy: even the Pope was compelled to recognise Charles III as King of Spain: a small army of Imperialists, entering the kingdom of Naples, ejected the French and Spaniards. Thus 1706 saw France completely driven forth from all her old Italian positions, and the Empire triumphant from Naples to the Alps.

The great campaign of 1706, according to the views of Louis, was to be that of the Netherlands. Louis of Baden could easily be kept in check on the Rhine by Villars; and it was evident that after his experience of 1705 Marlborough was not going to attempt another concerted movement with him; with a fine army between Maestricht and Tongres, the English general was clearly aiming at Flanders, and the hitherto intact line from Namur to Antwerp. To grapple with this formidable foe the blind partiality of Louis had appointed Villeroy: Chamillard, the worthy but utterly incompetent War Minister, could only raise funds by odious and oppressive means, which added to the popular discontent. Villeroy, with a strong army, larger than Marlborough's, lay at Louvain; with the presumption of incompetence, he thought himself strong enough to take the offensive, and, without awaiting Marsin, pushed forwards till he came face to face with the allies not far from Tillemont, near the little town of Ramillies. Marlborough's strength had increased daily, and the numbers on the two sides were very nearly equal[1], except that the allies were full of confidence in their great captain, while Villeroy made blunder on blunder, as if his only aim were to be beaten. He gathered his best troops on his left wing, behind a morass, so deep that they could neither attack nor be attacked; whereby he at once made his

[1] Coxe counts up 60,000 allies, and 62,000 French.

available force decidedly inferior to that of the allies. Marlborough fell like lightning on his right, where the ground was easy of access, and where the cavalry, the strongest arm of the allies, had full opportunity of acting with full force. Villeroy had neglected to occupy the higher ground with infantry; the Danes in the allied army, well led by the Prince of Würtemburg, broke in between the French cavalry and the main part of their line, and drove them asunder. The Maison du Roi, the King's body-guard, fought with determined bravery, but were ill-commanded and soon overpowered and broken. Marlborough having thus got hold of the higher ground at the left end of the French lines, soon made the position of their infantry quite untenable; when the village of Ramillies was stormed, the French gave way along all their line, and retreated in great confusion to Louvain.

The battle of Ramillies was fought on May 23, 1706; the next day but one Marlborough was in Louvain: the French fell back hastily before him. Ramillies was as decisive for the Netherlands, as Blenheim had been for Bavaria; not till the French troops, still in utmost confusion, found themselves behind the Lys, did they venture to halt and take breath. The allies took Brussels and Malines, Ghent and Bruges, and in them proclaimed Charles III King of Spain and overlord of the Netherlands: Antwerp and Oudenarde threw open their gates; Brabant took oath to the Austro-Spanish King. So strong was the feeling in favour of Charles that Louis XIV did not venture, as heretofore, to make war in the name of the King of Spain: in such strong places as he still held the natives were disarmed, the Spanish governors replaced by Frenchmen: the army was broken up and distributed among the fortified towns. Hainault, Namur, and Luxemburg alone remained in the hands of the French.

Thus on three sides, in Spain, in Italy, and the Netherlands, the fortunes of the Bourbon King waned before those of the Austrian; it looked as if the year 1706 had been decisive as to the whole Succession-question. Philip V was an outcast from

his capital; his richest provinces at home and abroad had revolted or were wrested from him; his fleet was unable to keep the sea; his commerce had perished.

Two things saved the Spanish monarchy for the Bourbons; the one, the personal character of Philip, who displayed throughout these evil days a cool and unshaken firmness and tranquil energy, which rejoiced the hearts of the Castilians; the other, the bitter feeling which raged between the two portions of the Spanish monarchy. Castile, the loyal, the Catholic, would never accept a foreign sovereign from the hands of Aragon: the fervour of religious feeling also entered in;—though Charles III might be Catholic, his friends were all heretics: the English, the Dutch, the French refugee-regiments under Cavalier, were all so many offences against their deepest feelings. There sprang up a new enthusiasm in central and western Spain, on the crest of which Philip was borne back to Madrid in triumph: he re-entered his capital at the end of October 1706. Early in the following spring (April 1707) Marshal Berwick, with a fine force of French and Spaniards met the allies under Ruvigny at Almanza on the borders of Murcia and Valencia: the battle was severe and long, the French refugees fighting with most determined bravery, until Cavalier's regiment of Camisards perished almost to a man; at the end the Spaniards and French won a complete victory: the allies lost everything and fled into Catalonia. Valencia submitted; Aragon and Catalonia were reduced, and the Bourbons were finally and firmly established in the Peninsula.

Soon after the battle of Ramillies Louis began to treat with England and Holland separately: success seemed likely to loosen the coherence of the allies; divergences of opinion arose as to the government of the Spanish Netherlands; jealousies against Marlborough sprang up: the Tories in England became the mouthpieces of all the dislike for the war and its burdens. The Emperor Joseph I drew towards Louis XIV and made a Treaty of Neutrality for Italy, which released a strong force of French and Spanish troops.

In spite of all the disasters of 1706 France showed still a bold front in 1707, and equilibrium seemed to be restored between the combatants. The allies were paralysed by the appearance in Germany of a new and incalculable element, the young Charles XII of Sweden, who for a large part of the year 1707 seemed to hold the balance entirely in his hands. Would he ally himself with France, and become a kind of dictator in central Europe? or would he follow out his earlier schemes, and in conjunction with his friend the new King of Poland, Stanislaus Leczinski, resist the growing power of Russia? Would his policy be Northern or Southern? As he stood with his army in Saxony, meditating these questions, all Europe watched him anxiously: Louis sent him an embassy; Marshal Villars, who was in command on the Rhine in 1707, crossed that river, stormed the lines of Stolhofen, and pushed on as far as Höchstett:—what if Charles XII were to join him, and, renewing the old alliance between France and Sweden, unite with him in a fatal attack on Austria? The age, however, had changed: France was not what she had been in the days of Richelieu and Gustavus Adolphus. Charles XII distrusted the political attitude and hated the religious views of Louis: he deemed himself, like his great predecessor, above all things a champion of Protestantism, and had claimed for the Silesians that liberty of conscience which Austria was not very ready to grant. On the other hand, Joseph I had conceded what he asked, while Louis had been crushing his Protestant subjects: how could he ally himself with the Jesuit-led intolerant King of France? Marlborough also paid the young hero a visit in his camp at Alt Ranzau. It is said, and the thing is not unlikely, that the splendid presence and high military renown of the English Duke dazzled Charles XII, who felt a young man's reverence and enthusiasm for the greatest soldier of his age; at any rate all thought of alliance with France came to an end, and Charles marched for Poland with his fifty thousand men, where he met his ruin at Pultawa in 1709.

About the time that the Swedes marched eastward, Villars'

army was weakened by the orders he received to detach a strong force to the south of France, to relieve Toulon, now invested by the allies, who were compelled to withdraw. Villars also fell back to the Rhine. In the Netherlands nothing was done. Vendôme stood securely on the defensive against Marlborough, and the year ended much as it had begun, except that the confidence of the French armies was somewhat restored, and Villeroy at last had been deprived of his command, though he did not cease to enjoy his master's confidence and favours. He was one of the few personal friends of Louis XIV: born in the year of his master's accession, he had passed a brilliant youth at Court as 'the charming Neufville': delightful in the salon, in command of an army he was nothing less than a national disaster: he was the most striking example of that tenacious belief of the King, that his choice, his friendship and his advice, could stand in the stead of military talents. The battle of Ramillies and the clamour that arose after that great blunder compelled the monarch to withdraw his friend from scenes of war. The French ships, half men-of-war, half corsairs, still inflicted very severe losses on Dutch and English commerce; they sallied forth from their two strong harbourages of Dunkirk and Brest, and harassed their enemies on every sea: great was the indignation in England when, in September 1707, Dugnay-Trouin defeated a fleet of ships of war which had been sent out to check him.

In 1708 Louis proposed to restore the fortunes of the war on every side. Five fine armies were set afoot; an expedition was planned for Scotland, where the Union of 1706 was by no means popular. James III was to sail from Dunkirk, surrounded by a swarm of corsair-ships, carrying six thousand troops. The expedition failed lamentably; the Jacobites could only show themselves in the Firth of Forth, and, being unable to land, returned to the French coasts. The attempt had done the King's cause much harm and no good; men saw that he had abandoned nothing of his old determination to restore the Catholic dynasty in Great Britain: he aroused the old antipa-

thies, and led men to think it useless to negociate with him;—that so long as he had any strength he would be a menace to his neighbours.

With incredible efforts, and by means of a sort of military press-gang, a large army was gathered for the Netherlands; and the command given to the Dukes of Burgundy and Vendôme. Once more Louis defeated his object by his choice of commanders: it was impossible for the irregular and idle libertine Vendôme, with his sudden dashes of vigour and genius of war, to work harmoniously by the side of the decorous the virtuous and unenterprising Burgundy. To this unhappy combination the disasters of 1708 are due. The position of the allies was not very secure in the Spanish Netherlands: opinion in those districts had once more declared itself strongly for Philip V; the cities were eager to open their gates to the French[1]. In fact, the French were welcomed as deliverers; had they but reduced Menin on the Lys, and Oudenarde on the Scheldt, they might have secured their position almost without striking a blow. Marlborough had fallen back to the Dyle, and there awaited Prince Eugene; after deluding Berwick and the Elector of Bavaria on the Rhine, he crossed the Moselle at Coblenz, the Meuse at Maestricht, and then joined his friend at Brussels. The French were now moving on towards Oudenarde, which was still in the hands of the allies: Vendôme was reluctant to go forward, and, whether from indolence or fear of Marlborough and Eugene, could not be prevailed on to advance, though the Duke of Burgundy warmly urged him. The allies took advantage of this indecision, and marching westward from Brussels crossed first the Dender and then the Scheldt at Oudenarde; then turning northwards along the left bank, they fell on the French just as they also were slowly getting across at Gavre, below Oudenarde (11 July, 1708). The French were in the utmost confusion; their artillery, with the exception of

[1] 'The states,' said Marlborough, 'have used this country so ill, that I no ways doubt that all the towns ... will play us the same trick as Ghent has done.' Coxe's Marlborough, ii. 467 (ed. 1818).

four guns, had not come over; the regiments came up, one after another, in disorderly style; the generals issued contradictory commands. The Danes and Dutch got round the right flank of the French, and finally decided the battle. Fortunately for the conquered, night came on: but for that friendly darkness hardly a man could have escaped. Marlborough says that ninety-five standards were captured, seven thousand prisoners; scarcely any pieces of artillery were taken; for there were few to take. The remnants of the French force fell back to Ghent.

Hereon the allies decided on a great step. They crossed the frontier and sat down before Lille: it was destined to be the greatest siege since that of Ostend in 1601; half Europe was represented within or under its walls. Lille, the southernmost strong place in French Flanders, covers the whole frontier of Artois, and is the bulwark of Paris: in these days it was what Amiens used to be in the time of the Dukes of Burgundy, to whom Lille belonged. When Duke Charles perished at Nanci, Louis XI laid claim to it; in the Treaty of Madrid it was ceded to the Austro-Spanish power by Francis I. The Spanish Kings held it till it was seized by Louis XIV, and secured to France by the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle in 1668; from that time till now it had remained quietly in his hands. The fortifications were regarded as one of Vauban's masterpieces. Marlborough had proposed to mask Lille, and with the main body to penetrate boldly into France, showing thereby that his views were in advance of the time, and that he was a modern tactician; but the Dutch would not hear of it, and Prince Eugene doubted. So they sat down to reduce the place; and Marlborough commanded the protecting army, doing it so well that no serious attempt to relieve Lille was made, though the French armies were stronger than those of the allies. At the end of the year the perilous enterprise was crowned with complete success; the town yielded in October, the citadel in December. Nothing could have been more feeble and divided than the counsels of the French commanders:

Boufflers had made a noble resistance; unaided and exhausted he was obliged to capitulate: his regiments marched out with honours. Thence the allies passed on to Ghent, and captured that city with all its stores and munitions, then took Bruges and the whole of Flanders. Their parties overran Artois and the coast of Picardy. How deep must have been the vexation at Versailles and Paris, when news came that a party of Dutch soldiers, guided by some French refugee officers, had suddenly swooped down on Sèvres, so close to Versailles, in hopes of seizing the Dauphin, who only escaped them through an accident[1]. The memoirs of the time breathe the bitterest sense of humiliation and dejection. Berwick himself says that Louis fell in with all Vendôme's suggestions, and rejected all reasonable plans: the generals quarrelled incessantly: the campaign was far more unfortunate than it need have been: 'we committed folly on folly[2].'

And so ended the year 1708; over the glory of the sun of Louis XIV had rolled cloud after cloud; but none so dark and ominous as this of the capture of Lille, and the insecurity of the capital itself.

As though her other sufferings were not enough, the seasons now fought against France: the winter of 1708, 1709 was very severe[3], and added the horrors of famine and cold to the despondency of defeat and insecurity. Disturbances broke out on every side: all France, with curses and violence, accused Louis of being the author of her misery; the government seemed powerless to succour the starved and dying; the King issued edicts, which were chiefly based on an ignorance of all economic rules. The Parliament of Paris offered to assist in an enquiry as to the hoarding of corn; this offended Louis, who bade that august body attend to its own business of hearing lawsuits. The conclusion drawn by all France was that Louis feared to allow an independent body to look into matters;

[1] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV, ch. xxi. (p. 266, ed. Louandre).
[2] Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick (A. 1708), (Michaud, III. viii. p. 404).
[3] Saint-Simon, Mémoires, iv. p. 331.

for, they argued, 'if things had been all right, the proposal could have only been agreeable and useful to the King.' All articles of value seemed to disappear: men wondered what had become of the coin of the realm: there was no money to pay for goods: commerce was at a stand-still, confidence had perished: a new coinage, with the value of the coins arbitrarily raised by a third, gave a momentary relief to the King: it was the last stroke which completed the ruin of trade.

Then Louis decided again, and more seriously than in 1706, to make endeavours for peace. After the battle of Oudenarde he had sent Rouillé to the Hague; but Heinsius had made reply that no negociations could even begin till Philip V was withdrawn from Spain, the two Electors of Bavaria and Cologne dispossessed, the fortifications of Dunkirk ruined and her harbour blocked up. Even this hard stipulation did not prove a bar to further dealings: the King declared himself willing to make any sacrifice; above all, in April 1709, he consented to treat on the base of the cession of Spain, and the retention of Naples only for his grandson Philip: the conditions as to the two Electors he evaded: he declared himself willing, if Lille were restored to France, to fill up the port and dismantle the walls of Dunkirk.

Louis showed throughout great firmness and dignity, and a real willingness to yield. But he clearly regarded it all as a personal matter, not as the affair of his country: he had so long been accustomed to be omnipotent, that public questions only showed themselves to him in one light. So in the very document[1] in which he yields so much, he treats it all as a divine chastisement inflicted on himself, and as a sacrifice demanded from himself; he loftily declares, with grand humility, that 'he forgets his glory,' and stoops to consent to a resumption of the old basis laid down in the Treaties of Westphalia.

This lofty resignation did not hinder Louis from making his best endeavours to evade the necessities of his position, and to lessen the bitterness of the terms proposed by the allies.

[1] It is preserved in full in Torcy's Memoirs (Michaud, III. viii. pp. 586-588).

These terms were needlessly harsh: the counsels of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, who felt no trust in the monarch's faith, and honestly believed that nothing but absolute exhaustion could quiet his old ambition, pushed the allies into extravagant proposals which Louis could not accept. He was asked not only to withdraw all help from Philip V, but actually to assist in driving him out of Spain, a bitter humiliation which he surely ought to have been spared. They more reasonably insisted on the cession of ten towns in the Netherlands as a substantive barrier between Holland and France; they also demanded the cession to the Empire of Strasburg and Breisach, and the abandonment of all claims on Alsace, beyond those sanctioned by the Peace of Westphalia. In vain did Torcy, who managed affairs in Holland, try to bribe Marlborough: venal as he might have been and shifty between English parties, he was not to be bought by France. The allies stood firm; and over the ejection of Philip V from Spain the negociations finally broke down in June 1709. Then Louis XIV, for the first time in his life, addressed himself to his people, by Torcy's advice, in a letter to the governors of the provinces, explaining the grounds on which he had broken off the conferences at the Hague, and calling on the nation to make fresh efforts on the renewal of war[1]. The appeal was answered by an outburst of patriotism; for even in her deepest troubles France is ever brave. Villars, whose good luck was still unbroken, was sent to the Netherlands, and found himself at the head of a fine army; all supplies and money that could be raised were sent thither: 'the lack of coin,' says Berwick, who commanded at Grenoble, 'was still a sore embarrassment: the Court did not send us the very smallest help; all it could gather was instantly despatched to Flanders[2].'

Villars could not save Tournay, which fell before the allies: but, when Marlborough pressed on to invest Mons, he set himself to bar his way at Malplaquet, a little town between Valenciennes

[1] Torcy, Mémoires (Michaud, III. viii. p. 634).
[2] Berwick, Mémoires (Michaud, III. viii. p. 405).

and Mons. There he skilfully took up a very strong position, with the two wings of his army sheltered behind two woods, the right extremity resting on Malplaquet, and the left on the village of Blangies. Marlborough commanded the left of the allies, opposite Sars Wood, behind which lies Malplaquet; Prince Eugene was on the right, with Blangies wood before him. It was the 11th of September, 1709. The battle was begun by Prince Eugene, who seized the wood, and pressed through it till he came out in front of the French left: Marlborough with repeated and determined efforts could make no impression on his side, till Villars, seeing that his left was likely to be overwhelmed, weakened his centre to support it. Then Prince Eugene slanting to his left, struck the enemy on the flank, while Tilly and Cadogan with the English and Dutch rushed in for a final attack on the weakened centre. At last the French gave way, but not before both Eugene and Villars had been wounded: they drew back in good order under the skilful command of Marshal Boufflers, who had honourably consented to serve under Villars.

It was a victory for the allies, though very dearly bought: the carnage had been greater than in any previous battle. The two armies were nearly equal in numbers, each about ninety thousand strong; but the allies suffered far more than the French, as they were the attacking side. As has been remarked, of twenty accounts of this battle none agree as to the losses on the two sides; Villars declared that, while France lost only six thousand, the allies had thirty thousand killed or disabled. That is an extreme exaggeration; the truth seems to be that the loss of the allies was nearly if not quite double that of the French [1]. After this great battle Mons did not venture to hold out, and became the prize of the victors: with these three successes, Tournay, Malplaquet, and Mons, the allies were satisfied, and the campaign came to a close.

It is a singular fact, though quite intelligible, that although it

[1] Lord Stanhope is probably not far wrong when he puts the French loss at 12,000, the allied at 20,000.

was a distinct defeat for them, the battle of Malplaquet did much to restore the spirit of the French: the soldiers, before disorganised and without confidence in their leaders, once more began to think that the terrible Malbrook might be faced and fought. On the other hand the victory was received with the gloomiest ill-will in England. Men asked what could be the use of such fearful carnage, and why the war did not come to an end. The tide of opinion, which was destined so soon to raise the Tories to power, was already rapidly turning throughout England.

Negociations were renewed in 1710 at Gertruydenberg, and Louis made offers which went far beyond all he at last conceded at Utrecht. He would recognise Charles III as King of Spain; refuse all aid to his grandson; give four cities as hostages for his good faith; cede Strasburg and Breisach, and renounce all claims to Alsace, except the prefecture of the ten imperial cities; rase all his fortified places from Basel to Philipsburg; fill up Dunkirk harbour and destroy its works, and lastly give to the Dutch a chain of barrier-cities. Yet these great withdrawals from his earlier power were not enough: the allies, guided by Heinsius, Marlborough, and Eugene, still insisted that the King should promise that, if necessary, he would eject his grandson by force: and Louis, treating that point as the point of honour, firmly refused to make the promise. The negociations therefore failed; and war must go on as before.

In the Netherlands Marlborough and Prince Eugene directed all their efforts to break Vauban's inner line of defences for the northern frontier of France by the capture of Douai, which fell after a vigorous siege of nearly two months: detachments of the allies traversed all Picardy, and even reached the Seine: next, Bethune, Aire, and Saint-Venant fell, though the losses of the allies in these sieges were not inconsiderable. Villars, who did not venture on a battle, covered Cambrai and Arras; the allies did not feel strong enough to attack them this year, hoping, next year, to push on into the old Provinces of France and to

threaten Paris itself. The military strength of the kingdom seemed to have suffered entire collapse: all the old conquests of Louis had slipped out of his hands; it was thought he would after all be compelled to accept the hard terms of the allies: it might be heroic to say, 'If I must fight, I will fight my foes, not my children;' but the power of fighting seemed at last to be passing away, and ruin to impend over France. How changed from the days of the Peace of Nimwegen was the position of the great Monarch: his home-provinces were now insulted by his foes; he himself no longer fit to go out to war, his people in the last agonies of want, the glory departed. It was the general opinion in 1710 that if the allies did but hold firmly together, the overthrow of the French power was imminent[1]. With an Austrian Prince at Madrid, with the passages of the Alps closed, with the Rhine-frontier thrust back again, with a new and close line of barrier-fortresses across the level country to the north, with Dunkirk rased and closed, and the sea-powers omnipotent on the ocean, France, it was believed, would never again be a menace and a danger to Europe.

'What a terrible distance,' says Michelet[2], 'from Sully's Economies to Vauban's Dixme Royal, so melancholy a picture, and then from that again to the grim despair of Boisguillebert's book[3] (1695, 1707). Louis, however, could not bear the truth: Vauban had fallen into disgrace; his patriotic book was condemned to be pilloried; Boisguillebert was actually exiled for speaking out too plainly. What could be hoped from a King who felt nothing for his people, and resolutely shut his ears to their complaints?

Yet before the year closed things had already shown signs of change; and, just as all appeared hopeless for France, new light began to dawn. In Spain, though the fortunes of Charles III had again been in the ascendant, and he had defeated Philip in Catalonia and again under the walls of

[1] L. von Ranke, Franz. Geschichte, iv. pp. 198, 199.
[2] Henri IV et Richelieu, p. 474, note.
[3] See Martin, XVI. p. 528.

Saragossa: though all Aragon recognised him as King, and he once more entered Madrid in triumph, yet the Castilians were more attached than ever to Philip, the sovereign of their choice. When he retired to Valladolid they rallied round him in crowds; and Vendôme was sent to command a fresh army of Spaniards favourable to his cause. With these he followed Charles, who had again been obliged to abandon Madrid, and coming up with his retreating force, first defeated and captured the English rearguard under Stanhope, and then completely overthrew the main army at Villa Viciosa. Charles with the ruins of his force fell back behind the Ebro; by the end of the year Philip V was once more firmly seated on his throne.

It was from another side that the changes came which saved the aged King. Those who watched the movement of party-spirit in England had seen already that the Whigs were losing strength, while their antagonists gained at every step: even the brilliancy of Marlborough's career, which in 1706 had secured a great majority to the war-party, was ceasing to dazzle England. Men were growing weary of the war: the Sacheverel trial, the feeling that Malplaquet had been an unnecessary carnage, the belief that the allies were pushing Louis XIV too hard, and that the terms he offered were fair and just, the growth of the Tory-party in the country, the unlucky proposal to make Marlborough Captain-General for life;—all these things combined to undermine the rule of the Whigs.

It is almost an axiom of English politics that a war is never closed by the ministry which begins it. Accordingly as England was becoming very desirous of peace, it was clear that the Whigs, the old antagonists of France, the declared enemies of the Stewarts, the friends of Marlborough (who, though not himself a Whig, had been in closest union with them, and had been rewarded with their hearty support), would have to give place to men not so strongly opposed to Louis XIV, and not committed to the extreme policy expressed in the terms insisted on by the allies. Queen Anne herself, who, though she professed great dislike for party, was distinctly friendly to the

Anglican Tories, was quite prepared for the change: the elections of 1710 went strongly against the Whigs.

Nothing shows so clearly the frivolous character of Voltaire's work on the Age of Louis XIV as his treatment of this crisis of English politics. The change had been coming on very gradually; the overthrow of the Whigs and the war-party was one side of a general movement which could not escape notice and had its roots very deep in the tendencies of English political life; yet Voltaire can see nothing in it but a miserable Court-intrigue between two rival favourites. A few trivial anecdotes seem to him to give a sufficient account of the shifting of the balance of politics: 'Some pairs of gloves of a strange cut which the Duchess refused to give the Queen; a little water dropped by her on Mrs. Masham's gown—these things changed the face of Europe[1].' The fall of 'great Sarah' and the rise of Abigail Hill at the beginning of 1711 were but the outward symptoms of the complete change which had already been wrought within.

Nothing fell in so closely with these changes, which led to the ascendency of the Tories, and threatened Marlborough's overthrow, as the unexpected death, in April 1711, of the Emperor Joseph I, who fell a victim to that much-dreaded scourge of Kings, the small-pox. As he left behind him daughters only, his brother Charles gladly turned his back on Spain, where his affairs were very gloomy, and returning to Germany was elected King of the Romans, and then (in December, 1711) Emperor, as Charles VI. He was the only hope of the House of Hapsburg; and how could English statesmen desire that on that one head should rest the four crowns of the Empire, of Hungary, of Bohemia, of Spain? All the old objections to the close union of Spain and France were at once transferred to Austria; if Louis would but give sound guarantees that the crowns of France and Spain should never be worn by the same Prince, England would be completely satisfied.

Even before this great change took place in the balance

[1] Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 284 (ed. Louandre).

of opinion, secret communications had been opened between England and France. The Abbé Gautier, formerly attached to the French Embassy at S. James', and a close friend of the Poet-Diplomatist Prior, appeared in January, 1711, at Versailles, and asked Torcy whether he wished for peace? adding that he was authorised to tell him that he might, if he would, make peace with England independently of Holland and her other allies. 'It was as if he had asked a man long ill of a dangerous disorder if he would like to be cured[1]:' no prospect could have been so welcome to the harassed and worn-out King of France.

The campaign of 1711 seemed to feel the changes in the air. Prince Eugene was recalled to Germany, to protect Frankfort during the Imperial election: Marlborough was still in command, with Villars again opposed to him. The French Marshal refused to fight, and carefully watched his great antagonist in the plains about Lens, boasting that he had brought the Duke to a 'ne plus ultra,' and had completely checked his advance. Marlborough proposed great things, though not for 1711, as Prince Eugene was gone. He intended to pass, by masterly manœuvres, through the French lines, to take Bouchain and Le Quesnoy; to camp for the winter thereabouts, and then early in 1712, in combination with Eugene, to press forward into the very heart of France. In preparation for this 'grand project' as it was termed, Marlborough successfully broke the French lines and invested Bouchain, which capitulated in September. The next step should have been the reduction of Le Quesnoy: but the Germans were still absent, the Dutch very backward, the English intent on their separate peace: and the Duke could not venture on any farther operations. The whole of the 'grand project' resolved itself into the capture of Bouchain, which was the one and only result of the campaign. Bolingbroke says with a sneer that Bouchain cost England seven millions of money. Doubtless the campaign came in for much criticism of this kind.

[1] Torcy, Mémoires (Michaud, III. viii. 666).

By the end of the year a kind of coup d'état at S. James' brought about the ignominious dismissal of the Great Duke from all his offices and dignities; the triumph of the Tories was complete. His fall coincided in time with the actual election of Charles VI to the Imperial throne. In vain did the new Emperor send Prince Eugene to England to support the cause of the falling Duke: it was too late; the peace-party was omnipotent. Eugene was insulted, and could make no impression; Marlborough was the great obstacle in their path, and could not be left in power.

Before this, the secret overtures made by the Abbé Gautier had been carried on more than one stage. Prior the poet had been sent over to Versailles, as an accredited agent of the English government, and by October 1711 things had gone so far that it could be openly announced by the Ministers that they were about to treat for peace, and that Utrecht was to be the place of conference.

It was agreed, between England and France, as a base for negociations, that (1) there should be no talk of dislodging Philip V from the Spanish throne, on condition that England should keep Gibraltar and Port Mahon, and that the union of the two crowns of Spain and France should be made impossible; (2) that England should be placed on the footing of 'the most favoured nations'; in other words, that France should concede the utmost commercial privileges to her; that the waters round the English coasts should be the British waters and inviolable, and that, to secure her against corsair-raids, Dunkirk should be rendered harmless; and (3) that France should make certain cessions to England in America.

Louis hereon offered Philip V an alternative; either Italy, with the reservation of all his rights in France, or Spain and America, with an absolute renunciation of all claims to the French throne. He chose the latter without hesitation. Spain had declared for him and had shed her blood in his cause; he would not abandon her: and if the needs of peace, and the security of the European balance of power, demanded the

resignation of his rights in France, he was willing to make that sacrifice. At the time he thus decided he was not aware how very near he stood to the succession, or he might perhaps have hesitated. Weak and easily guided by family influences as he was, Philip had in him a good portion of his grandfather's character. When things were at their worst, he had shown a gravity and dignity which delighted the Spaniards; he did not occupy himself too much with the ungrateful task of reforming them, or of reducing the frightful abuses under which the realm was perishing: in his better and his worse qualities alike resembling Louis, he also resembled him in being a monarch suited for a despotic order of things; he ruled with propriety over a falling nation; to him Spain owed such independence as she afterwards still possessed. The belief that Spain would always act in harmony with France, or that she would add strength to the greater monarchy, was never realised: so long as she depended on France she was a constant source of weakness, and as time went on she developed interests of her own, and followed lines of policy which diverged widely from those of France.

Thus the negociations between France and England had begun with overtures which, as von Ranke says[1], were 'like a backstairs intrigue in a comedy,' carried on by an adventurer-abbé, and an English second-rate poet, in profound secrecy. They were however destined to be successful, thanks to the great changes in the western world, and by the end of 1711 it was clear that the long quarrel of Europe was really drawing to its close. The Congress of Utrecht opened in January 1712.

While these new hopes of peace were shedding the first rays of comfort on the deep gloom of France, a terrible disaster befell the aged Monarch, and one which, selfish and heartless though he was, by its reiterated strokes, and by the prominence it gave to the Duke of Orleans, added a weight almost of despair to his heavy burdens. In April 1711 Monseigneur, the

[1] Französische Geschichte, iv. p. 205.

Dauphin, a man of fifty, was seized with the small-pox[1], and died: whereby the Duke of Burgundy, the hope of France, now became heir-apparent to the throne. The Court very speedily consoled itself; for the Dauphin was a man of no character or intelligence, lazy, uneducated, timid to cowardice; he had been insignificant at Versailles, where the King treated him almost as a child, and all his life the Dauphin had 'lost the father in the King.' Louis regarded him as a kind of necessary evil, as his inevitable successor, who was to be kept as long as possible in tutelage. His son the Duke of Burgundy was a very different personage: choleric and impetuous, obstinate, determined, and intensely proud, his passions and vices in his earlier days were always in excess. With these qualities he joined great vigour, wit, and ability; his intelligence was remarkable, he grasped at all kinds of knowledge: his Bavarian mother must have been a very clever woman. On this vigorous but difficult nature, as a rich and germinant soil, the teaching of Fénelon worked wonders. The young man turned entirely towards his tutor. He became affable and gentle, humane and patient, modest and a penitent. His whole energies, curbed not destroyed, were now concentrated on religious matters: 'the day was ever too short for him': his austerities alarmed and almost scandalised the Court; 'the King with his skin-deep devotion and regularity soon saw, with secret anger, that the life of so young a prince was an unconscious censure on his own.' After a period of such unwonted exaltation and pious exercises, came a time when the Duke returned to the ordinary duties of Court-life, though his religious impressions by no means faded away: he was sent into the Netherlands; and might have done fairly as a general, had he not been constantly thwarted and his influence under-

[1] Those who love scandal should read Saint-Simon's account of his long conversation with the Duchess of Orleans, and their frank lamentations when the Dauphin's illness seemed to take a favourable turn and to threaten no danger. Mémoires, v. pp. 425, 426. Saint-Simon's picture of the illness and death of the Dauphin is among the most powerful and the most ghastly efforts of his genius.

mined. The old King, never very fond of him, was now quite alienated from him; 'it became odious and dangerous to say a word at Court in his favour.' His patience and admirable temper overcame this ill-will: and at last he was completely reconciled to his grandfather and to Madame de Maintenon: the whole hopes of France were centred on him and on his lively spouse, the daughter of Victor Amadeus, who would have seconded him to the best of her power in his schemes of government: she was the light of the Court, and the only person who could divert the stiff gloom of the King and amuse his weary soul. Early in February 1712 she was seized with fever, and died after a week's illness. 'With her, joy, pleasures, even amusements, everything gracious, disappeared from court; darkness brooded there. . . . Never princess so much regretted, never one so worthy of regret[1].'

Before men had recovered from their consternation at this sudden blow, the Duke of Burgundy also sickened of fever, and in a few days he too died: then their elder boy, a child of five years, followed them: their younger child, Louis, Duke of Anjou, a babe in arms, was barely saved by most vigilant care and nursing: he was preserved to rule over France as Louis XV. The hand of Death was hard on France both in what it took and what it spared.

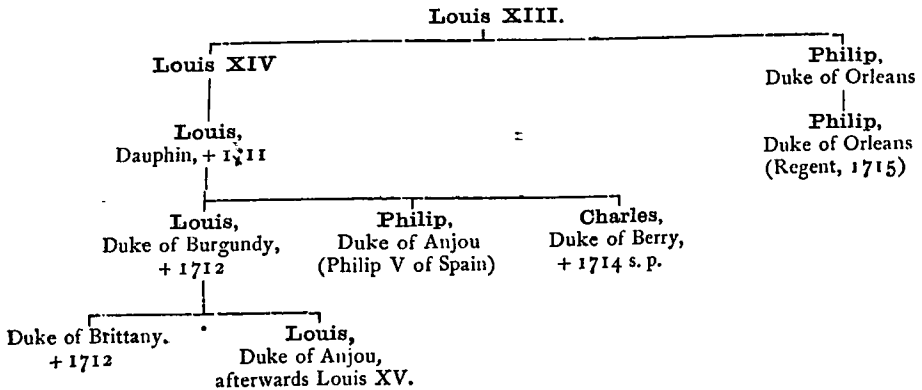
There spread at once a persistent rumour of poison: some whispered that the Duke of Maine had determined to rid himself of all the King's legitimate descendants and to seize the reins of power[2]; others thought that Maine's rival, the Duke of Orleans, now heir after the Duke of Berry and the one delicate child of the Duke of Burgundy, had swept away the royal line[3]: as he went with his spouse to sprinkle holy-water on the coffin of the Duchess of Burgundy, the crowd, with no measured voice, accused him of the ghastly crime: the

[1] These descriptions are all from Saint-Simon, Mémoires, vi. ch. xv. (ed. Hachette).

[2] Saint-Simon, in his hatred for the King's bastards and the Jesuit-party, does not hesitate to support this slander.

[3] See Table on p. 332.

TABLE VI.—THE FAMILY OF LOUIS XIII.



anger, disappointment, and sorrow of France, seemed to find solace in the unfounded charge. The old King himself could not endure the sight of his nephew: to this, and to the intrigues of the Jesuits and Madame de Maintenon, is due the monstrous blunder which he committed, of trying to force his illegitimate children on France, and to entrust her destinies to the Duke of Maine.

Early in 1712 the English government had sent the Duke of Ormond to the Netherlands in Marlborough's stead, with orders to do nothing, which he was capable of fulfilling punctually. The Emperor, the Princes of the Empire, and the Dutch were still keen for war; for they believed themselves strong enough at least to hold their own till the great revolution, which all men expected daily in England[1], should overthrow the Tories in favour of the Duke of Hanover, and reversing their policy, restore the war-party once more to power. Accordingly, though the English signed a separate truce in May 1712, the Dutch and Germans insisted on going on with the war. Prince Eugene proposed to take Landrécies, and to march into France, occupying Picardy in force. But it was soon seen that the master-mind was gone. Prince Eugene had none of the Great Duke's power of management: he did not know how to overcome the ineptitude of the Dutch; and when he sat down at Landrécies, he placed his chief magazines at Marchiennes on the Scarpe, a town six or seven leagues distant, midway between Landrécies and Lille, leaving to his Dutch allies the task of defending the long and open line of communications. To secure these, Denain on the Scheldt was essential; and the Dutch had placed a considerable force there, on which Prince Eugene reckoned as being strong enough to hold out, till, in case of need, he could come up to the rescue from Landrécies. Villars, however, skilfully and boldly made a feint, as if he would relieve Landrécies, then turning sharply off for the Scheldt, struck suddenly and hard at Denain (24 July, 1712). The Dutch soldiers posted there fled headlong,

[1] Torcy, Mémoires (Michaud, III. viii. p. 721).

leaving their defences intact, undefended: Prince Eugene came up just in time to see them driven headlong into the Scheldt, and all his plans ruined in an instant. It was a vast reverse: Marchiennes with all its huge supplies fell at once into Villars' hand; Eugene raised the siege of Landrécies; the brilliant and successful stroke at Denain was followed by the fall of Douai, of Le Quesnoy and Bouchain. The campaign was infinitely disastrous to the allies; it restored the spirit and confidence of France, and hastened on the negociations at Utrecht. Villars returned in triumph to Paris. The Dutch, completely cowed, abandoned all thought of farther war, and accepted the truce already agreed on between France and England: Prince Eugene also betook himself to Utrecht, and the princes of the Empire came in as well. Matters now went on speedily, though the interests were very many and complicated: in a solemn session of the Spanish Cortes, and in the presence of the English Ambassador, Philip V renounced the crown of France, and the Cortes formally ratified and guaranteed the act. The Dukes of Berry[1] and Orleans, for themselves and their heirs, did the same for the Crown of Spain. Hereon arose a curious and very significant discussion. The English ministers, still distrustful of Louis XIV, and remembering how little store Mazarin and he had set on the renunciations of 1661, and how completely throughout his life he had acted in defiance of all he had promised in that direction, naturally asked what guarantee they might have that the engagements thus entered on would be held sacred. Louis declared that his own royal word was enough: the English on the other hand intimated that his word had been already tried and found wanting; and proposed that as the Spanish Cortes had ratified Philip's act, so the States General of France should be convoked to ratify his promise. To their minds, familiar with constitutional life, this seemed the most natural thing in the world: but Louis was infinitely offended: the very thought of any constitutional power in France was an

[1] Third son of the Dauphin; he died in 1714.

insult to his honour and dignity; he resented the idea that there could be found in his subjects an authority to confirm his own. The allies at last gave way, and contented themselves with seeing the renunciations received and registered by the Parliament of Paris[1].

At last the whole sheaf of treaties was complete; and on the 11th of April, 1713, the Peace of Utrecht was signed by all the powers, save the Empire and the Emperor, who stood out, and purposed to continue the war, rather than agree to stipulations which abandoned all their interests. The House of Austria was to lose all chance of the crown of Spain, even of the friendly Catalonia; the older Franco-German frontier was not to be restored; not even was Strasburg to be given back: the English openly declared that they took as the basis of the peace, not the Peace of Westphalia, but that of Ryswick.

The Germans, however, serious as were their grievances, and ill as the Tories had treated them, soon found that war was out of the question. They speedily lost Landau again, after having had to abandon Speyer, Worms, and Kaiserslautern. After this Villars crossed the Rhine at Strasburg, stormed the German lines before Freiburg, and, in spite of all Prince Eugene's efforts, took the town. At last, the Emperor recognised that he must yield: negociations went on at Rastadt for the Austrians, at Baden for the Princes of the Empire; and in the course of 1714 two more treaties, named after those two towns, completed the long series, closed the war, and finally gave peace to Europe.

One may readily believe that Louis was very sincere, when, writing to Madame de Maintenon, in February 1714, he says, 'Peace is not yet made, but will soon be signed. Prince Eugene is gone back to Rastadt, and Villars returns thither; all is agreed on, and I have ordered Villars to sign. I thought you would not be sorry to hear this good news a few hours before the rest of the world: but say nothing about it, only that

[1] See the account of the difficulty in Saint-Simon, vi. p. 320.

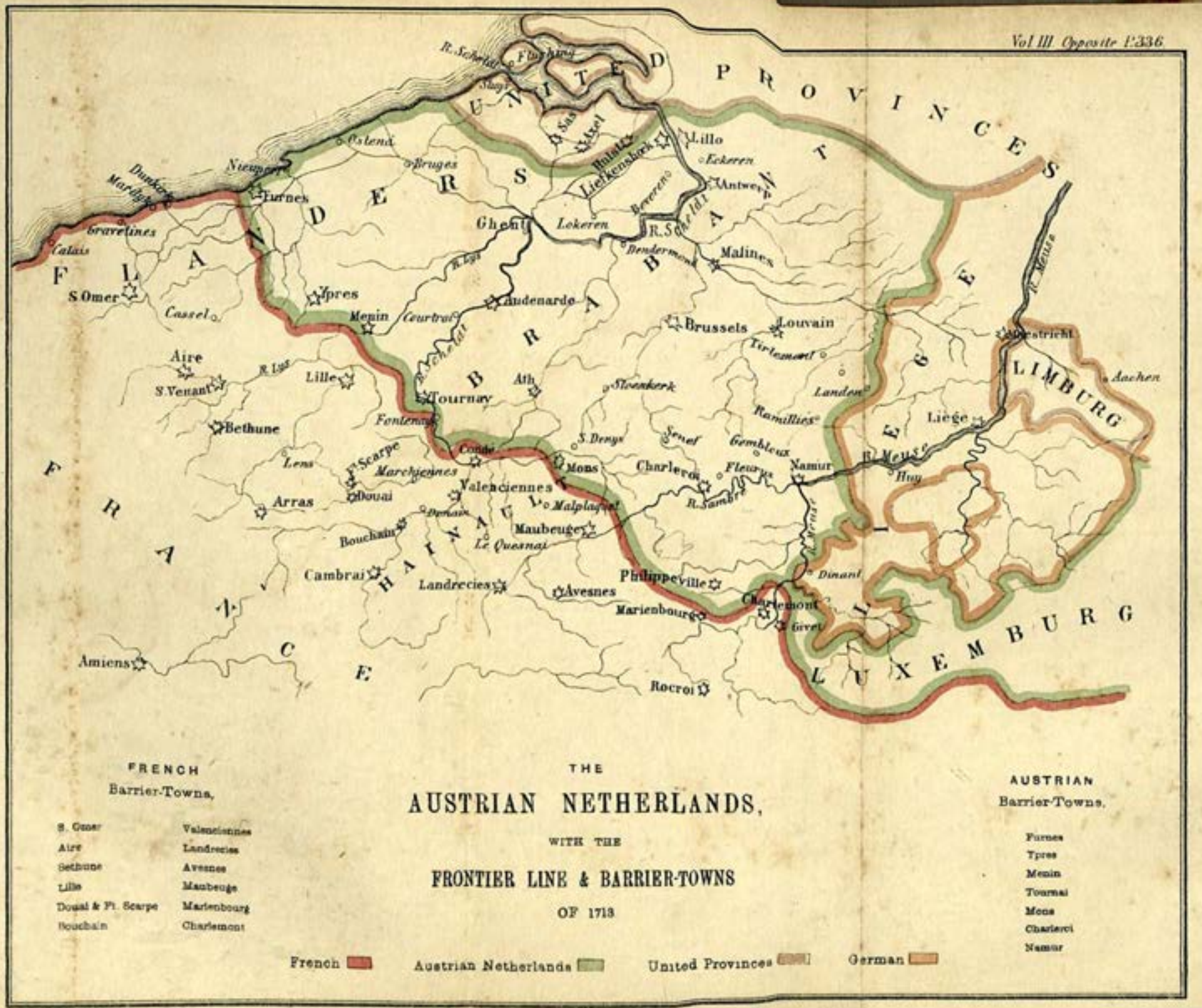
Prince Eugene has returned to Rastadt, and that the conferences are going on again. I am sure of peace, and rejoice at it with you. Let us thank God with all our hearts[1].'

Ten treaties in all emerged from the diplomatic forge on which so much hammering had been going on. These were between (1) England and France; (2) Holland and France; (3) Savoy and France; (4) Portugal and France; (5) Prussia and France; (6) England and Spain; (7) Spain and Savoy; (8) Holland and Portugal; all these signed at Utrecht: finally (9) at Rastadt between Austria and France; and (10) at Baden between the Princes of the Empire and France.

1. Of these the first was clearly the leading treaty[2]; and England was the power which, as it had provided the greatest general in the war, obtained the greatest advantages in the peace. The Protestant succession to the Crown of Great Britain, through the House of Hanover, was secured, and the Pretender would be compelled to leave France; the English diplomatists obtained the permanent severance of the crowns of France and Spain, so far as engagements could secure it; Dunkirk was to be dismantled; Newfoundland, Acadia, and the Hudson's Bay territory were ceded to England, France reserving only Cape Breton and her share in the great fisheries off the coast; equal colonial trading rights were agreed on for France and England, and a more favourable commercial treaty drawn up (11 April, 1713).

2. The Dutch succeeded in establishing a really strong barrier between the Provinces and France[3]: the Spanish Netherlands were handed over to the Republic, which bound itself to pass them on, after conclusion of a satisfactory barrier-treaty, to Austria; Lille was given back to France, as the nucleus of her barrier, on the south side of the frontier; and a favourable commercial treaty was also drawn up between France and the United Provinces (11 April, 1713).

[1] Œuvres de Louis XIV, vi. p. 220.
[2] Dumont, Recueil des Traités, VIII. pp. 339, sqq.
[3] Ibid. pp. 366, sqq.



THE

AUSTRIAN NETHERLANDS,

WITH THE

FRONTIER LINE & BARRIER-TOWNS

OF 1713

FRENCH
Barrier-Towns.

S. Omer	Valenciennes
Aire	Landrecies
Bethune	Avesnes
Lille	Maubeuge
Douai & Ft. Scarpe	Marienbourg
Bouchain	Charlemont

AUSTRIAN
Barrier-Towns.

Furnes
Ypres
Menin
Tournai
Mons
Charleroi
Namur

French · Austrian Netherlands · United Provinces · German

3. The Treaty with Savoy[1] involved a rearrangement of boundaries favourable to Savoy; and the Duke received the Island of Sicily with the title of King: he also reserved all his rights to the Spanish crown, if the Bourbons failed there (11 April, 1713).

4. The Treaty with Portugal[2] was a small matter, and referred only to her boundaries in South America (11 April, 1713).

5. The Treaty between France and Prussia[3] was also comparatively slight: France recognised the royal title of the King of Prussia, and his rights over Neufchâtel; on the other hand Prussia ceded to France all her claims to the Principality of Orange: Upper Gelderland was handed over by France, in the name of Spain, to Prussia (11 April, 1713).

These were the French treaties of Utrecht: the Spanish followed a little later, and were—

(1) Spain with England[4]; whereby Spain ceded to England Gibraltar and Minorca; under an 'Assiento[5],' or contract signed at Madrid (26 March, 1713), certain much-prized rights of slave-trading had been granted to the English; lastly Spain bound herself not to grant to France or any other power commercial liberty of trade with the Indies, and promised not to alienate any of her possessions (13 July, 1713).

(2) The Treaty between Spain and Savoy[6] (13 August, 1713) in fact only carried out the cession of Sicily promised in the Treaty between France and Savoy; it also recited the other terms agreed on by France. The Treaty between Holland and Spain[7] (signed 26 June, 1714) was also unimportant, and little but a repetition.

Later, the Peace of Rastadt, between Austria and France, compelled the Emperor to take the good things reserved for him by the English in their negociations, advantages which, when they had previously been offered him, he had rejected with anger.

[1] Dumont, VIII. p. 362.
[2] Dumont, VIII. p. 353.
[3] Dumont, VIII. p. 356.
[4] Dumont, VIII. p. 393.
[5] Dumont, VIII. p. 330.
[6] Dumont, VIII. p. 401.
[7] Dumont, VIII. p. 427.
[8] Dumont, VIII. p. 415.

These were the Spanish Netherlands, after the settlement of the barrier-question; the confirmation of the Austrian position in Italy; Naples, Sardinia, the Milanese, and the Stati degli Presidii being guaranteed to her: the Emperor undertook to replace the two erring Electors of Bavaria and Cologne in their territories and rights, and to withdraw the ban of the Empire from them, on condition that France recognised the ninth Electorate, that of Hanover (6 March, 1714).

Lastly, the Empire acceded to such a 'status quo ante bellum' as was in all important points agreeable to the provisions of the Peace of Ryswick; that is, Freiburg in the Breisgau, Breisach, Kehl, and all places held by France on the right side of the Rhine, were given back to Germany; Alsace and, above all, Strasburg were kept by France. The stipulations of the Treaty of Ryswick, by which the Roman Catholic faith was re-established in all places in the King's dominions, even in Strasburg, were retained in full force[1]. (Baden in Aargau, 7 September, 1714.)

If we may sum up these results in a few words, it comes to this:—the ancient grounds of quarrel were at last given up, and the older powers ceased to be predominant in Europe, while new states entered in, changing entirely the conditions of the balance. Thus Philip V was recognised by all Europe, as King in Spain and over the Indies, though the power of Spain was immensely reduced, and things came very nearly to that position which had been sketched out in the second Partition Treaty: on the other hand the wishes of England were gratified by the full recognition, not only of the Revolution itself, but of that Hanoverian succession which was its natural outcome.

England is the great gainer by the Peace: she steps into the arena as the chief power of Europe; full of vigour on every side, she begins to pass from her narrow insular limits to a world-wide empire: Gibraltar and Minorca, the great acquisitions in North America, the implied superiority involved in

[1] Dumont, VIII. p. 436.

the overthrow of Dunkirk,—these things are the beginnings of that astonishing development which makes the eighteenth century the most splendid period of English history.

Two kingdoms emerge, destined, with very different careers, to become great, and to be the centres round which nations will cluster and reconstruct themselves: these are Prussia and Savoy, the absolutely new elements in the balance of power. And in the far North the Russians are conscious of a new life, destined soon to make itself felt in Europe.

Holland is made secure and comfortable: her part in European politics becomes ever less prominent. The great losers, in fact, are the old antagonists, Austria, Spain, and France. Austria seems to gain in Italy: but her strength is really lessened, while North Germany passes entirely from under her power and influence: Spain loses most of her outlying possessions: that however would not have weakened her, had she retained any virtue and vigour at home.

For France it was a great withdrawal from her high position. She had suffered and bled almost to the death, and in the end had lost ground in Europe: her pretensions had not been allowed: her grand schemes had proved too much for her strength, she too was on the downward path: the absolute monarchy had had its glories, had done its natural work, and was on the rapid slope, which before the end of the century led it to a dishonoured grave.

A small war went on for a short time in Spain; for Barcelona, in the hands of the insurgent inhabitants, refused to recognise Philip V: Berwick, in the autumn of 1714, reduced the place after an obstinate resistance, and in the ruins of the city lay buried the last of the old Catalan liberties; it was the last sacrifice of freedom to the spirit of centralised monarchy.

Thus in 1713 and 1714 came peace, much longed-for and needed, to Europe: men criticised it, and were dissatisfied with it, especially in England, where the days of Tory rule were already numbered: it was thought that the treaties had permanently endangered the equilibrium of Europe, and that they must lead

to another war. On the contrary, the results justified those who made the peace; for it lasted for nearly a generation; Europe remained on the whole quite tranquil, until there arose in Prussia a new power, which found due expression in the reign of Frederick the Great: fresh wars in new quarters then heralded the incoming of another age of European politics.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST YEARS OF LOUIS XIV.

A.D. 1713–1715.

THE opening years of the eighteenth century had been a time of great suffering for France. She had been weak, impoverished, and backward at the end of the previous century; yet she must have been a smiling garden in comparison with the France of 1713. John Locke, travelling for his health, and in pursuit of the study of medicine attracted to Montpellier in 1675, 1676, traversed the whole of France, and has left us in his Diary some very graphic touches, which give us no little insight into the state of the country. After telling us that all the land seemed to be under tillage, he says that the 'rent of lands in France is fallen one half in these few years, by reason of the poverty of the people. Merchants and handicraftsmen pay [in taxes] near half their gains[1].' On the Loire he sees that the country is in a miserable state: in the wretched little towns through which he passes the houses are but one story high and very poor; and many of these in ruins: the cabins of the peasants in the country-districts are yet worse; there is no glass in the windows; they are mere clay-hovels. In the Grave district, a rich country, he talks with a field-labourer, and learns that out of his pittance of seven sous a day the taxgatherer takes three: that his food is 'rye-bread and water: flesh seldom seasons their pots;'—and this they reckon to be a flourishing

[1] Fox Bourne's Life of Locke, i. p. 350.

condition, for in many parts the case of the peasant is far worse[1].

In comparison with this testimony of an independent eye-witness we may set the account of France which we find under the trustworthy hand of Vauban, who travelled through some portion of France in order to get at a true view of the state of the country by personal inspection. It shows us how much a quarter of a century had done to increase the misery and ruin: a period which coincides with the time of the highest triumphs and splendour of the great Monarch's reign. He gives us a picture of the Vézélay district, as it stood in 1699; it should be remembered that it had a naturally poor and hungry soil, though otherwise it is well-placed in point of climate and position, being part of the rich vine-growing Duchy of Burgundy. 'Three-fourths of the people,' he says, 'lived on barley or oaten bread; and as for clothes, no one had a crown's worth on his back: hence followed emigration, beggary, death, and a very notable diminution of population: every seventh house was in ruins; one sixth of the arable land'—in Locke's days all had been cultivated—'was thrown out of tillage; the remainder is ill-farmed, and covered with straggling woods, hedges, briars, and bush[2].'

It was believed that there had been about fifteen millions of Frenchmen before the Succession War, and that this number had fallen to thirteen millions by 1707. The state of families is also remarkable. Vauban's tables give us in one large district an average of less than three persons to a house, and of only two children to each family: the thirty-five houses of one village could muster only forty-three sons and daughters: one labourer indeed, and he must have been a kind of phenomenon, had six children: two had three, a few had two, all the rest one or none. These miserably small families prove that even in prosperous times population must have increased very slowly;

[1] Life of Locke, i. p. 402.
[2] Vauban, Dixme Royale, pp. 162, 163, ed. 1707.

under the actual circumstances of France, a rapid diminution was taking place.

Vauban also draws a most melancholy picture of the state of these poor folk, a prey to disease, thanks to bad food and exposure to all weather[1]. 'The high-roads of the country,' he says, 'and streets of towns and burgs, are full of beggars, whom famine and nakedness have driven forth[2].' It was said that even some of the King's valets mingled with the hungry crowd and begged their bread: when the Dauphin died in 1712, it was a pitiable thing to see his servants, who on their bended knees saluted the aged King with howls and cries; they declared that they were now doomed to perish of famine. 'One tenth of the whole population,' Vauban adds, 'were actual mendicants; five-tenths do not absolutely beg, but are on the very verge of starvation; three-tenths are ill at ease, embarrassed with debt and lawsuits; and even of the one remaining tenth,—the army, the bar and clergy, the high noblesse, the distinguished noblesse, the officials in bureaux, the good tradesmen and burghers having property,' perhaps a hundred thousand families in all,—not more than a tenth part are really quite in easy circumstances: and this pitiful few are chiefly taxgatherers, agents and their officials, dependents on the King's court, a few tradesmen, and a small number of other persons. What can be a gloomier picture than this of absolute destitution in all classes except the unproductive wasteful few? Vauban's reflexions led him to urge on the King the establishment of a Royal Tithe: of the concentration, in fact, of all taxation on the King himself, and the abolition of all existing partial taxes—'the Taille, the Aide, the Douane from province to province, the Tenths of the Clergy, the extraordinary affairs, and all other onerous and involuntary taxes:' this would involve the equal assessment of all society, and (as his title-page says) 'would bring in to the King a revenue, certain and sufficient, without cost, and without being a charge

[1] Dixme Royale, pp. 96, 97, 214.
[2] Ibid. pp. 3, 4.

to any one of his subjects more than any other[1].' For Vauban saw that the two bleeding wounds of France were first the army of taxgatherers, and the mismanagement and confusion of their business, which ended in a terrible oppression of all honest workers; and secondly, the 'prodigious number of exempts,' the army of privileged persons who claimed exemption from the ordinary taxation of the realm[2]. Yet how could Louis XIV take so great a step as this? The reign of Louis XIII had taken from the nobles all political power, and had left them their privileges; the withdrawal of their privileges might make them claim back their power. The wholesome belief that all are equal before the law, all equally bound to contribute to the state, was not compatible with a despotic monarchy: it continued to be a dogma of the philosopher, not a practical truth of the politician, till France had shaken off the worn-out vestments of her monarchy, and had erected a new Imperialism, built up on the equalisation of all society. The monarchy stood, as on a pedestal, on a hierarchy of nobles and privileged persons; the Empire gathered round it its own Court, composed of men raised by it, distinguished not by birth or hereditary privilege, but by merit or the Imperial favour.

Vauban's plan therefore was not tried, though about two years after the death of that great soldier and statesman, in 1709, the finance-minister Desmarets ventured to borrow and apply it, in spite of the vehement resistance of the privileged orders, to the possessions of the clergy and the noblesse. It was this reasonable tax, which brought in forty-five millions of livres, that enabled Louis XIV to struggle through the last years of the Succession War and to conclude at last the Peace of Utrecht on far better terms than he had actually offered in 1709.

This tax, however much it may for the moment have relieved the heavy pressure on the industrious classes of society, could do nothing for the real prosperity of the country; for its proceeds were all absorbed by the expenses of the war. It was,

[1] Vauban, Dixme Royale, 1707, Title Page.
[2] Ibid. p. 3.

in fact, a great triumph for the principle of autocratic power; for it declared emphatically that all the property of France, in whose hands soever it might be, was really the King's, and that he had absolute right to tax it at his pleasure. The Duke of Burgundy saw the matter from this side, and was one of the most vehement opponents of this simple but significant impost[1]. The misery went on as before: the taxgatherer and the privileged consumer steadily ate out the vitals of France: as one has seen in insects, the wings and brilliant exterior remained after the body was gone.

It was this general wretchedness which made the great winter of 1709 so terrible: the destruction of trees, vines, and growing crops, was caused by the fact that up to January the weather had been so warm that all was budding and bright as if spring had come; then followed sharp frost, lasting for some weeks, then a warm week came, succeeded in turn by a fresh burst of cold, as severe as before. Yet the cold, as Michelet shows[2], was by no means extreme, though severe for France: it was such a sharp winter as is often felt without the slightest harm in Germany, and even sometimes in England. The terrible thing was, as he adds, that 'France had been stripped to her shirt' before it began: Vauban's saying, 'that the peasant did not wear a crown's worth of clothing,' wins a dreadful significance: the countryman dressed, then as now, in a cotton blouse; but then, not as now, it was almost his only upper garment. The houses too were all tumbling down; no one had heart for repairs: the unglazed windows let in all the cold[3]: the cattle had all been eaten up, so that people had not even the resource[4] of living among their beasts, and getting the solace of their warmth. So it came about that a severe winter was terribly fatal, numbers perishing of cold: the produce of the

[1] Saint-Simon, Mémoires, v. 366.
[2] Michelet, Histoire de France, xiv. p. 307.
[3] Arthur Young noticed, three quarters of a century later, in many places, that there was no glass in the windows.
[4] Still practised in the Engadine and other high-lying parts of Switzerland.

earth was all frozen and killed; famine set in, with its inevitable accompaniment of disease; the government, as usual, either did not interfere, or interfered only to aggravate the evil, as when it forbade the sowing of spring-corn[1]. The most ominous stories were abroad: Madame de Maintenon was accused, wrongly enough no doubt, of trafficking in grain, and of making a fortune out of the miseries of France: the King charged himself with the supervision and punishment of hoarders of corn;—and did nothing. 'Starved skeletons' clamoured round the gates of Versailles, and could hardly be kept out of the royal presence; the King turned a deaf ear to their misery, though he was unusually attentive to his religious duties. He had also a very robust appetite, and ate so much that his courtiers were sometimes quite alarmed.

The peasantry fell into a savage state; and finally attacked whatever came in their way. Madame de Maintenon herself had the misery of the people sharply brought home to her notice; for she was mobbed by the crowd when they saw her one day in her carriage. One does not know what effect so eloquent an appeal had on her smooth and placid nature; but there is no record of any serious attempt on her part to lessen the popular misery. The whole nation was starved, and became dreadfully thin: from this time onward for a century the caricaturist draws the Frenchman as a thin, tall, lantern-jawed creature: Europe became very familiar with the contrast between the walking skeleton of a Frenchman, and that gross overfed animal, John Bull.

We can hardly imagine anything worse than Fénelon's ghastly picture of France in 1693 or 1694[2], 'they die of famine: the culture of the land is almost abandoned; towns and country districts are being depopulated; all trades languish, and find no sustenance for the artisan; commerce is annihilated[3].' Yet after 1709 it must have been still worse[4].

[1] Saint-Simon, Mémoires, iv. p. 332.
[2] In the famous anonymous letter addressed to Louis XIV, and undated.
[3] Fénelon, Œuvres, iii. p. 427 (ed. 1845).
[4] Saint-Simon, iv. 331 sqq.

There was no lack of edicts and ordinances[1]; but mostly in the wrong direction: prohibitions to do this or that; spasmodic bounties to set manufactures, chiefly useless ones, afloat; doubled tolls on the roads, which finally extinguished the flickering commerce of the country; vexatious douane-taxes at city-gates or between province and province; ridiculous tariffs on bread-stuffs, which only aggravated the difficulties, without really reducing the price. Food-riots took place in many towns; even in some garrisons the troops revolted, and had to be brought back to their duty by presents of money.

To complete the significant and fearful picture of the desolation of France, one touch yet remains: out of the hill-country of Auvergne, the wolves came down in troops on the plain-lands about Orleans; in 1712 their ravages were so alarming that Louis sent his hunting-equipage thither, and was obliged to authorise the people of the districts 'to take arms in their own defence, and to make a quantity of great battues[2].'

It hardly need be said that the finance of the country had also fallen into hopeless disorder. All Colbert's great institutions and efforts had ceased to work. Society was overwhelmed with debt, from the government downwards: and the interest of the old debts, if paid at all, was only paid by means of fresh loans: expedients dating from the worst times of the feudal monarchy were tried again: the value of money was tampered with, to the utter paralysis and ruin of any commerce that remained. The miserable makeshift of 'promissory-notes' instead of payment, was attempted: all possible sources of revenue were pledged or anticipated for years: the receipts of 1712 were in large part payments in advance for the year 1717. There was no credit, no revenue, no circulating medium, no freedom of commerce: these years were a time of state-bankruptcy and ruin. In the midst of it all Louis would not abate his large expenditure: the charges for the Court remained untouched, even if the army was left unpaid: to reduce the

[1] Anciennes Lois de France, tom. xx. pp. 453–648.
[2] Saint-Simon, vi. p. 317.

Court would be a 'kind of sacrilege against the monarchy[1]:' even the little Court of S. Germain must be fully kept up.

To such shame and misery at home had the long and exhausting glories of the great King led his country: the extravagance of his Court, his reckless waste in buildings, his all-devouring wars, the ignorance and blundering of his administration, had all joined in bringing France to this: the State was like a ship which lies slowly settling down, motionless and doomed, before she makes the fatal plunge, and disappears for ever.

The Treaties of Rastadt and Baden were not signed too soon, if France was to have peace and rest: for the revolution in England which the Germans had been daily expecting, took place in the autumn of 1714[2]: the intrigues which aimed at the restoration of the Stuarts failed signally; the country had no wish for a Jacobite and Catholic sovereign, and both Whigs and Anglican Tories accepted the Protestant Succession. This Succession now placed on the English throne a German prince, who had fought on the side of the allies against Louis XIV, and was known to be friendly with the Whigs: their heads were lifted up again. Moreover the old suspicions against the ill-faith of Louis had sprung up again, and not without ground. The Pretender was still in France; the stipulations as to Dunkirk were not fulfilled; and Louis was busily engaged on a new harbour for his cruisers hard by at Mardyk: the Dutch and the Empire had not yet agreed as to the barrier; things looked ominous on the Continent; the English believed themselves disgraced by the Peace of Utrecht, and thought that Louis meant to make sudden war on them, and to try to place the Pretender on the throne. Nor were these fears altogether without foundation: though the utter exhaustion of France was perhaps a sufficient guarantee for peace.

The two years between the Peace of Utrecht and the end of the reign of Louis XIV were very dark and desolate. After

[1] Martin, Histoire de France, xiv. p. 595.
[2] The Treaty of Baden was signed 7 Sept. 1714.

the death of the bright but somewhat silly and flighty Duchess of Burgundy, gloom settled down permanently on the Court, and even Madame de Maintenon could hardly endure the dull monotony of her dreary duties at Versailles. She, utterly weary of the King, and he unchangingly faithful and attached to her; she complaining of her hard lot, he still lavishing tokens of affection on her—this is one of the saddest pictures of the sad time.

There are few incidents worthy of record in these last years: beside the change of dynasty in England, which affected the relations of the two countries, there are only the persecution of the Jansenists, and that attempted revolution in favour of the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse, to which the King was persuaded by the influence of Madame de Maintenon and his Jesuit confessor, Father Le Tellier.

This attempt to continue into the next reign the dominant principles of the past, by the exclusion of the Duke of Orleans from all power, was another branch of the same Court-intrigue which had much to do with the overthrow of the Port Royalists: and this, again, was an outcome of the influence of Le Tellier, who had in reality been nominated by Fénelon to the post of the King's Confessor. So that in a way these dark acts of the King's last years can be traced back to that saintly prelate the Archbishop of Cambrai.

The old good-will towards the Jansenists (as their foes called them; they objected to the name) still survived in France, though the stress of public affairs kept it out of sight. In Church matters men were divided into a Gallican, or quasi-Jansenist, party and a Jesuit party: the great bulk of the clergy, notably the bishops, were friendly to the former, as were also the lawyers: they were regarded as the true supporters of the Gallican Liberties. On the other side, the King, the Court, and the Ministers were decidedly with the Jesuits, and formed the dominant party in the administration. The Jansenists, to their Augustinian tenets and high views as to the grace of God, joined a dislike for the omnipotence of the King, and the

dogma of Papal infallibility: the Jesuits joined to their Molinist opinions as to free-will, which came nearer to the ordinary temper of mankind, and gave them a firm basis for their casuistry and management of consciences, a profound respect for the King's arbitrary power, and for the Pope's infallibility.

The Jansenist party was in fact approved of or acquiesced in by a very influential section of French society: Pontchartrain, Chancellor in 1699, and the more famous Henri d'Aguesseau, the Procurator-General, were both of them friendly to that party: it seemed to them to have in it the germ of an independent Gallican Church, for the liberties of which the legal profession in France had ever been very jealous. It was, in fact, one side of the opposition to the government of Louis XIV; vaguely and under-ground its criticisms on the royal life, the royal policy, the wars, the state of France, were a constant protest against that implicit obedience, that unreasoning unity, which was of the essence of the absolute monarchy.

It was the glory of Louis XIV that his life was coherent: that his fixed ideas impelled him ever in the same direction; and this direction involved an instinctive hostility to the Jansenists. It is not therefore astonishing that he filled up the short and tranquil remainder of his days not with attempts to solace the distress of his people, but with one more vigorous onslaught on opinions he disliked. His last public acts were acts of destruction; of destruction aimed at Gallicanism, and at the principle of pure hereditary succession.

There was one spot in France where the struggle which had been quietly going on throughout late years had not come to an end by the implicit subjection of the opponents of Jesuit predominance. The ladies of Port Royal aux Champs, those gentle nuns, who carried on the traditions of the place, with its high literary memories of Pascal and Racine and many an other name of note in the world of letters, were still felt to be a power opposed to the dominant views of King and confessor: it was with a feeling of special gratification that they forced the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Noailles,—who, without being

himself a Jansenist, had sheltered them,—to be the instrument of the overthrow of the famous nunnery in 1709, 1710. Le Tellier told the King he could never be at rest 'while that house so famous for its rebellions' still stood. Then the ladies were ejected by the lieutenant of police, and scattered about in different convents; the buildings were pulled down, the cemetery ruined, the whole place turned into arable land. The violent and reckless destruction of Port Royal is one of the worst blots on the King's reign.

But this was not enough: Madame de Maintenon persuaded herself that the opposition was aiming at the overthrow of all she held dear: she and Le Tellier urged the King on to a more general persecution of Jansenism: Quesnel's harmless book of his 'Moral Reflexions on the New Testament,' which Cardinal Noailles, whose influence and position as Archbishop of Paris were very great, had protected at first, was found to provide a suitable pretext for action: Pope Clement XI was led, though not without much pressure, to issue his 'Constitution' or Bull, the famous 'Unigenitus,' against the book. It was a declaration of war from the Papacy: the doctrines and positions condemned seemed to most men quite reasonable and pious; a considerable ferment sprang up in France: the Parliament of Paris modified the document before they would enregister it: Noailles with eight bishops refused to accept it, or to publish it in their dioceses. Those who adopted the document, or supported it in any way, by their writings or by publishing it in their dioceses, got the nickname of 'the Constitutionists': unfortunately this was the only constitution that monarchical France could boast.

A general attack was made by the government and the Jesuits on all who refused to acknowledge the Bull: the persecution went on in the dark; for the dominant party were too clever to make open martyrs: innumerable 'lettres de cachet,' warrants of arbitrary arrest, were issued; priests, magistrates, nobles, leading men of the opposition, were seized and shut up: it is said that thirty thousand persons suffered. The Jesuits wished to coerce the Parliament and even to make short

work with Cardinal Noailles; but the King hesitated, and they had to content themselves with harassing the Prelate. He owed his safety to the warm friendship of Madame de Maintenon, who, pitiless for others, never forgot or abandoned her friends; and the Cardinal's nephew had married her niece.

The 'obscure and ignoble malignity[1]' of persecution was felt to be a distinct sign of the decadence of the absolute monarchy. To persecute by intrigue, to strike in the dark, to stifle the least germs of independence, seemed worthier of the East or of the later days of Rome than of the reign of a great and splendid monarch, who if he must destroy ought at least to destroy in the light.

The popular disfavour, based on the misery of the country, and aggravated by this wretched persecution, was swelled by the one remaining act of the King's life. In July 1714 Louis issued an edict giving to his two natural sons, the Duke of Maine, and the Count of Toulouse[2], the honours and position of Princes of the Blood; it also declared them heirs to the throne in case the direct line failed. It was a scandal in the eyes of all France; the disorders of the King's earlier days, which surely ought now to have been decently put out of sight, were thus paraded openly before all. France, the land of hereditary right and direct succession, was offended and insulted in the tenderest point: indulgent as to the sins of the monarch, she resented the attack on her customs: it seemed as if the King, through his dislike for the Duke of Orleans, was determined to treat the Crown of France as his private property.

Soon after this, at the urgent insistance and almost coercion of Le Tellier and Madame de Maintenon,—who since the death of the Duchess of Burgundy had made the unworthy Duke of Maine her friend, and hoped by his means to prevail against Orleans,—the King made a last will, to regulate the regency of his great-grandson Louis, the heir to the throne. The Duke of Maine, an intriguer, clever, weak, and false, had

[1] La Vallée, Histoire des Français, iii. p. 426.
[2] Sons of Louis and Madame de Montespan.

risen, step by step, nearer to the throne, as one after another of the legitimate offspring and descendants of Louis XIV had perished in these sad years: the King drew nearer to him, and he fanned his resentment against the Duke of Orleans, setting the King's mind against him;—no hard task;—as a man of scandalously loose opinions and even looser life.

This last will and testament, extorted from the King's[1] failing strength by sheer persistence, arranged that Fleury, Bishop of Fréjus, should be the child's preceptor; Le Tellier, his confessor; the Duke of Maine, his guardian; and Villeroi, his governor; the Duke of Orleans, who could not be altogether passed over, was named Head of the Council of Regency, a post without any real power. All the authority, had the will been carried out, would have rested with the Jesuit-party, with Maine and his ally Le Tellier. The King scarcely believed that his will would be observed: he had not forgotten the story of his father's last testament.

There now remained nothing for Louis to do, save to bid farewell to the scene on which for so many years he had been the chief actor. When one remembers that he was born in 1638, and had come to the throne in 1643; that his reign covers a large tract of European history, in which he ever played a striking part; when one surveys the state of France herself at the time of his death;—two opposite currents of feeling occupy the mind: we feel that after all he was a great monarch, though a very bad King; and also a man of petty soul beneath an imposing exterior.

In the last scene of his life he retained the dignity of his demeanour; and his death brought out the nobler elements of his nature. He showed little consciousness of the terrible burden his life had been to France, or of the miseries of his people. The most striking sayings attributed to him at this time were his remark when he saw his domestics in tears,

[1] Martin, Histoire de France, xiv. 611, 612: 'J'ai fait un testament; on a voulu absolument que je le fisse; il a fallu acheter mon repos.'

'Why weep? did you think me immortal[1]?' and his little speech to his great-grandson, which was afterwards painted at that monarch's bed-head, whence Voltaire himself copied the words exactly[2]. 'You are soon to be King of a great realm. What I commend most earnestly to you is never to forget the obligations you owe to God; remember that you owe all you are to Him. Try to keep peace with your neighbours: I have been too fond of war; do not imitate me in that, nor in my too great expenditure.' He commends to the child moderation, and the duty of solacing his people; a phrase which re-echoes the dying words of that great and terrible monarch Louis XI. When in one of his last interviews with Madame de Maintenon he said, with wistful fondness, that their parting would not be for long,—that they should soon meet again in heaven,—she took the affectionate and pious wish much amiss, and did not at all like to be reminded of her age: yet she was older than Louis by about three years; for she was born in 1635, and was now just eighty years old. Her letters show that she was utterly weary of him, and certainly felt no eagerness to hasten the time of their reunion in another world. Soon after this, in her impatience to be free from what was a burden almost too hard to bear, she forgot her duties as a wife, and withdrew to S. Cyr, instead of smoothing her husband's dying pillow. It is true that Louis was almost senseless, and that S. Cyr was not very far off; still, as actually was the case, he might recover consciousness at any moment, and look in vain for her whom he loved to the last. To pray at S. Cyr in comfort seemed to her better than to watch by the aged partner of her life: and so, when the King feebly awoke and called for her, longing greatly to see her once more, she returned reluctantly from S. Cyr, and was with him for a little while: as soon as she could, she slipped away

[1] Massillon, Oraison funèbre de Louis le Grand, Œuvres, xii. p. 231.

[2] Siècle de Louis XIV, p. 371 (ed. Louandre); also quoted by Massillon, ib. p. 234, but with the chief points omitted, as became a courtly preacher.

again, and left him to die alone. If S. Simon may be trusted, those who ought to have been nearest him left him at this time: even his confessor, Le Tellier, neglected him: the Duke of Maine, for whom he had done so much, showed no sorrow, and came very little to the bedside. The King bade farewell to the Duke of Orleans in words which carried in them at least the germ of untruth: for he told him that he had left affairs in such a way as would be quite satisfactory to him. It was a courteous and pleasant manner of parting with a kinsman whom he had never liked: and perhaps the King thought that the position of Head of the Council of Regency was really all the power that the Duke was entitled to have. At the end, Louis took his leave of this world with a solemn dignity which was worthy of the manner of his life. The warmth and assurance of his religious feelings; his want of consciousness of the short-comings of his reign; the constant urbanity and dignity of his bearing; all contributed to make his exit from life remarkable and even grand. In the presence of the great power which levels all Louis seemed to abate naught of his high bearing: the egotism and selfishness of those around his dying bed, the neglect of those who should have been there and were absent, in no degree shook his firmness or called forth either passionate remonstrance, or the anger of a powerless despot. He died as he had lived, a splendid and dignified monarch. On the 1st of September, 1715, he left the crown of France to his little great-grandson Louis, then but five years old: a being whose reign for fifty long years was a satire on those last words of the dying monarch which night and morning he had before his eyes.

Neglect and selfishness around the death-bed;—and outside, who wept? The whole of France, which had waited long for this moment, burst out into cries of joy. Grand as the reign may have been, all grandeur is heavy for those who have to bear it; and the death of Louis XIV seemed to take the terrible burden off the shoulders of fainting France.

In the half-delirious joy of the country, and in the shameless orgies which followed, we see forecasts of the excitement and excesses which at another death-time of the monarchy will accompany Louis XVI to the scaffold.

The absolute monarchy had passed its zenith: even long before the death of Louis XIV it had been gradually going downwards; and the universal gladness which greeted the tidings of the King's decease may be taken as a measure of the heavy price paid by France for his wars, his glories and splendour. Yet that price was but the earnest-money of payments still to come: throughout the century we shall trace, in the steady descent of the country and the crown, the heavy penalty paid by a generous and powerful nation for the error it committed when it gave itself over, bound hand and foot, to Absolutism. For the sake of central uniformity, it stifled all freedom of life and thought, contented itself with the factitious glories of reckless royalty, permitted the monarchy to swallow up the free institutions, the commerce, industry, literature, of the land; in a word, it flung away all those precious things which are the true sum of a nation's wealth. When all Europe was ringing with cries of fresh life, sometimes extravagant, sometimes sentimental, always humane and ambitious of human good, France awoke to find herself falling behind in the race of European national life. Her waking came with great throes and efforts: her institutions, some disused and forgotten, others decrepit and tottering, proved unequal to the strain; and France, after sweeping away the whole of the venerable ruins that encumbered the land, found herself face to face with the gigantic task of the construction of a new society from its very foundations. It was a state of society in which logical conclusions and the reign of sentiment prevailed over ancient custom and absurd privilege: a movement which enlists many sympathies, and which, in spite of all that disfigured its career, was a lesson and a benefit to Europe. It was also one which, thanks partly to its own oscillation, but still more to the pressure of

opposition from the surrounding monarchies, lost confidence and faith in its own stability and power of ruling, and passed at last with a sigh of relief into the strong hands of a great military despot.

BOOK V.

THE DECADENCE OF THE MONARCHY.

A. D. 1715—1793.

INTRODUCTION.

'DIEU seul est grand, mes frères.' With these words, so simple, yet so loud-ringing, so full of contrast and significance, the famous orator Massillon, the chosen mouthpiece of the French pulpit, began his great funeral sermon on the death of Louis XIV in the Sainte Chapelle at Paris[1]. 'This King, the terror of his neighbours, the amazement of the universe, the father of kings; this King, greater than his great ancestors, more magnificent than Solomon in all his glory, has also learnt that all is vanity[2].' The great contrast, however, between royal splendour and omnipotence one day, and the dust and ashes of the next, is the obvious property of every ethical orator of every age: the ideas underlying Massillon's opening words, which give them the startling sound of a trumpet-call in the night, win a clearer significance if we regard them, as we fairly may, as a first expression of that craving for equality and brotherhood which marks the eighteenth century. They announce the essential equality of all men, where God alone is great, and the fraternity of all under His fatherly care, a truth too much lost sight of in the pride and privilege of the reign now past. Yet religion speaks of the equality of all, while she seems

[1] Massillon, Œuvres, xii. 187 (ed. 1770).
[2] Ibid. p. 188.

to belie herself at every step. Her view is that in the presence of the eternal, the finite is as nothing: and that compared with the Almighty we are so immeasurably small that all human rank shrinks into nothingness. In the eighteenth century a new rendering of these terms seized on the popular imagination: and the Church of France, which had, at the beginning, helped to proclaim it, was in the end powerless to find any solution of the wants, any answer to the demands, of the people; and she also for the time fell prostrate before the storm.

At first, however, the reaction which followed the death of Louis XIV had in it no element of popular life: it is true that the Regent was 'strong-minded' and had embraced opinions far from the decorous and accredited faiths of the late reign: but these things do not appear on the surface. The changes, wide-reaching and deep as they were, halt ere they reach that 'lower stratum,' as men chose to call it, which was, in fact, the French nation: ideas, aspirations, discontents, a mighty popular force, were left neglected and unheard; and once more the oscillations move from monarchy to aristocracy, and back again. The solid foundations of constitutional life, in the hearts of a people sharing in power, interested in public affairs, responsible for the direction of opinion, had never been laid in France. As the monarchy and the nobles steadily lose strength and credit; and as new ideas with menacing rapidity spring up beside them, and other forces gather power, we discern the coming on of an inevitable struggle; for the different elements of national life are neither happily welded into one, nor coerced into enforced tranquillity by the predominance of an all-powerful monarchy.

Yet the reaction seemed to cover almost all the branches of national life. In her foreign politics France at once broke with all the dearest traditions of the late reign: the whole efforts of Dubois were directed towards an 'entente cordiale' with England and Holland: the Jacobites dropped into the shade or disappeared; the government of King George had no reason to fear a renewal of the attempt of 1715. Instead of being the

humble henchman of her great neighbour, protector, and master, Spain at once aspired to independence, and under Alberoni's guidance even sought to impose her monarch upon France: the French Court ceased to be jealous of the Papacy, and refused to carry on that singular policy which had marked the latter years of Louis XIV, a policy which, while it repressed freedom of thought at home, resisted any increase of Papal authority over France. In home affairs the Regency was even more distinctly opposed to the past: it was proposed to break up the unity of administration under the sole eye of the monarch, and to substitute in its stead a system of Boards, presided over by and composed of great nobles, who hereby hoped to recover their influence in the State: the attempt to turn all France into governments like those of the Pays d'Etats was a step in the same direction: the 'holy maxim,' as it was styled, that 'all government must be for the good of the people,' was once more proclaimed, in opposition not to 'government by the people,' but to the centralised selfishness of the late reign. The overthrow of the baseborn Princes, the presence of a Cardinal in the Council, the restoration of the older system of government by a first minister,—all these things showed how far men had departed from the principles by which the reign of Louis XIV, from end to end, had been guided.

In social matters also, as well as political, the change was very great. The strict and solemn Court was gone; the pent-up impatience of a corrupt society broke loose at once: the change from the stiff etiquette of Louis XIV to the easy abandon of the Regent, was as great as that from the devout propriety of Madame de Maintenon to the orgies of the Palais Royal.

And lastly the ecclesiastical world also suffered change. Cardinal Noailles came forth from the obscurity to which the Constitutionalists had doomed him; the Jansenists lifted up their heads again; Le Tellier was exiled from Court; the Jesuits suffered eclipse.

Thus all the elements of society and opinion which had been sternly repressed found themselves free and popular: we natu-

rally expect considerable results to flow from this new condition of affairs. Yet, except in finance, the permanent effects were not great: the long and steady course of the late government had told on the vitality of the opposition. When a great stone is moved away from the spot on which it has been lying, the blanched plants that were under it again lift up their heads: still, their growth is weakly and pale; the sweet and tender grasses had in them less power of endurance than the rank weeds, which boldly spring up above the turf, and mark the spot where the crushing weight had long forbidden wholesome growth.

CHAPTER I.

THE REGENCY: PHILIP OF ORLEANS, DUBOIS, AND LAW. A.D. 1715–1723.

HAD the Duke of Burgundy survived his grandfather, is it clear that his anxious meditations on the welfare of France, on the errors of the late government, on the policy to be pursued at home and abroad, would have borne fruit in a regeneration of society, a golden age, in which a happy country should be governed by a wise and virtuous prince? The century saw more than one attempt to give life to the more humane and large ideas which with striking uniformity seemed to find welcome in the breasts of all European kings, excepting those of England. These attempts to give fresh life to society from above were not happy. Russia, Austria, Portugal, the Papal See itself, tried what could be achieved by 'enlightened despotism'; the essays all failed, and to the outer eye seemed to lead only to a tighter riveting of the chains of autocratic power on the struggling limbs of Europe. The direction along which Pombal and Joseph II and Pope Clement XIV tried to draw society was that in which the modern world has since endeavoured to move; but till the French Revolution had changed many of the conditions of the political world, the efforts for the most part proved abortive. So many of these enlightened princes were slaves to their own passions, that the experiment had no fair chance; still more, the reforms they projected were theoretic rather than practical; they failed to interest the main body of society, while they angered and alienated the old possessors of power.

This too would have befallen the Duke of Burgundy: the

parties at Court, the ambitions of the old noblesse, the interested opposition of those clerical bodies, the clergy and the lawyers, the profound indifference, perhaps even the dislike of the bourgeoisie, and the dangerous passions of a wretched peasantry, would all, ere long, have endangered the projects of reform: nor was the Duke himself, noble and pure and clever as he was, a man of sufficiently commanding soul to have succeeded in ruling as a beneficent despot, in spite of angry resistance or dull inertia.

Death, however, spared him the heroic and doubtful labours, fit for more Herculean shoulders than his; and his views and plans became the heritage of a far inferior man, his cousin Philip, Duke of Orleans. Not Fénelon but Dubois stood at his right hand.

The death of Louis XIV left France to the guidance of one of two opposite parties. If the King's will was observed, the legitimatised princes and the party of the Jesuits, headed by the Duke of Maine, were destined to act, through a long minority, on the principles which had guided the government of the late King: on the other hand stood the Duke of Orleans, the King's nephew, and next heir to the throne if little Louis XV were to die; he was supported by the bulk of the noblesse, chafing under their long exclusion from power, and insulted by the prominence given to the illegitimate offspring of Louis XIV. It was bad enough to have bowed the neck so long and low while he lived; should they be compelled to do so yet before his dead hand? With Philip of Orleans were the lawyers, a large portion of the clergy, the general favour of the people.

Two days after the King's death, the Parliament held a solemn session to hear the reading of the late King's will and its codicil. The Princes of the Blood were there, the Peers of France, the Presidents and Councillors of the three Chambers[1], and the members of the Parliament of Paris. When this ceremony had been performed, the Duke of Orleans rose, and after

[1] The Grand Chambre, Enquête, and Requête.

the needful courtesy of a few words of regret for the late monarch, went on to say that he highly approved of all that they had heard as to the education of the young King, and as to the arrangements for Madame de Maintenon and for S. Cyr. This said, he came to close quarters; he could not reconcile what had now been read to them with the solemn words which Louis had addressed to himself just before his death; the King could scarcely have understood the force of what in his last moments he had been compelled to do; in birth, attachment to the late King, love for and loyalty to the state, he deemed himself the right person to fulfil the duties of Regent, and should consider it a grave blow to his honour were he passed over; and lastly, he hoped all present would agree in entrusting that office to him, together with the nomination of the Council of Regency.

After this a discussion, long enough, ensued: the general will, however, soon made itself quite clear; and by a kind of popular 'coup de main,' the King's will was set aside, and Orleans was declared Regent, with full power to appoint the Council. The world outside gladly ratified the judgment of the assembly, and the party of the Duke of Maine shrank at once into complete insignificance.

The Duke of Orleans who thus grasped the reins of power, was yet in the prime of life[1]; he was perhaps the most conspicuous example of that combination of high intelligence, a wavering will, and an idle and degraded moral nature, of which we have so many marked illustrations in French history. His might have been a splendid career, had he been virtuous. There was so much that was noble about him, so much that was winning; he was in all ways so well-placed to carry out the Duke of Burgundy's plans for the welfare of France, that we mourn over him as over one of the greatest wrecks of life. He might have been the ever-honoured hero of the political regeneration of his country; he chose instead to leave behind him only the ill-odoured dregs of mad debaucheries.

[1] Born in 1674.

For Philip of Orleans was a man of unusual intelligence; intelligence both wide-grasping and sound. All pretty things in art and life were dear to him: he was a finished musician, and even composed an opera: he had that natural discernment of things beautiful which, under due restraint, makes the brightest culture and happiness of life. For science, philosophical or natural, he had both taste and insight: in speculation he was daring, and perhaps more bold than sound; Leibnitz was his teacher here: he set up a laboratory in the Palais Royal, and was a pupil of the great Hoffmann. To political discussions he brought a keen mind, free from trammels of prejudice and custom; he was an eloquent speaker, able to expound clearly the ideas which welled up abundantly in him. So far as his uncle's jealousy permitted, he had proved himself a ready and capable soldier, eager to emulate the splendours of the military career of his great-grandfather Henry IV. Such a nature is capable of the highest enjoyments that this life can provide; the pleasures of imagination, of taste, of enquiry, of pure intellectual speculation, were all his to take, if he would. Yet of all these he would take none to his heart, but chose instead the pleasures of sense, that shameless courtesan; and in the orgies of Apician banquets, in surfeiting, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, he drowned the better portion of himself.

Such as he was, the Duke of Orleans, with Dubois at his elbow, set himself to the task of governing France. His weakness lay in his indolence and distaste for work, and in his easy temper, which enabled the unworthy creatures round him to sway him as they would. On the other side, he had two powerful supporters;—the ghost, if we may so say, of the virtuous and earnest Duke of Burgundy, whose plans and papers became the guiding-line of the new administration[1]; and secondly, the real ability and fidelity of Dubois. This adventurous churchman has not had justice done him. We must abandon all attempt to defend his moral character: he was debauched, avaricious, extravagant also, and intensely ambitious; his ideas

[1] Saint-Simon, viii. p. 207.

as to the difference between truth and the lie seem never to have cleared themselves; — 'he exhaled falsehood from every pore.' All this must be allowed, and allowed without much set-off, though we might urge that we know most evil about him from the malicious pen of his bitter foe Saint-Simon, who hated him as only an intensely proud noble could hate a low-born adventurer and a churchman in power[1]. A poor and clever student, son of a small apothecary, he tended the chambers of the Principal of the College in which he lived[2]: then he was tutor in gentlefolk's houses; always supple, willing, ready, trustworthy; then engaged to educate the young Prince, who was afterwards to be Regent;—in all he displayed excellent intelligence and good business-qualities. His grand career began in 1715, when we are told he had entered on cordial relations with England even before the death of Louis XIV: Saint-Simon says he had accepted Lord Stair's promise of help for his master, if he found any difficulty in wresting the Regency from the timid hands of the Duke of Maine. His scheme of foreign politics was based on the known antipathy between the Duke of Orleans and Philip V of Spain. That monarch, inheriting much of his grandfather's character, disliked the Duke for his ungodly opinions, his free and easy manners, his opposition to the Spanish-Jesuit party; above all, he seems to have actually believed that the Regent had poisoned the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy. Dubois saw that no friendship could exist between these princes, and looked out for other allies: the new Government in England seemed to him just what he wanted. Friendship with the Whigs and George I therefore formed the base of his policy; he is said to have enjoyed a large pension from England[3]. Philip of Orleans willingly went with him in a kind of Anglomania, professing loud admiration for the land 'which sent no one into exile, and had no "lettres de cachet."'

[1] If any one would read a pretty bit of invective, they should turn to Saint-Simon's character of Dubois. Mémoires. xiii. pp. 48, sqq.

[2] Which gives Saint-Simon a chance, not missed, of calling him a valet.

[3] £40,000 a year.

With these guiding-lines,—the principles of the Duke of Burgundy at home, and the views of Dubois as to foreign policy,—the Regent set himself to recast the government, and to rearrange the relations, of his country.

The late King's will had nominated the Duke of Orleans President of a Council of Regency, composed of the Duke of Maine, the Count of Toulouse, the ministers, the heads of the bureaux, and five Marshals of France. All matters of business, all promotions, were to be decided by this body. The Duke would have had no initiative and no real power; for the Council would have been entirely in the hands of the friends of Madame de Maintenon; it was a machine so constructed as to secure the continuance of the policy and principles which had crushed France for the last forty years. Not only was a Council of Regency thus nominated; but the private charge of the little King was also to be entrusted to the same party, and indeed to the most vigorous among them: the Duke of Maine should have the tutelage, guardianship, education of the child in his hands; and to aid him, Villeroy, stoutest of the supporters of the Jesuit-party, was named the King's governor, and Fleury, the Bishop of Fréjus, most virtuous and narrow of prelates, his preceptor. Louis XIV himself had never been deceived into thinking that such an arrangement had any chance of standing; he knew that as the reaction after the death of his father had set aside the testament then made, so probably the party opposed to the 'dominance of the royal bastards' would never now allow those contemptible personages,—contemptible by reason of character as much as birth,—to hold the reins of power.

All this was swept away almost before it saw the light. Philip of Orleans at once appointed his Regency-Council; he named the Duke of Bourbon[1], representative of the legitimate Princes of the Blood, as its President: then he placed on it the two legitimatised Princes, the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse, and the ministers of the late King. The

[1] Louis Henry, Prince of Condé, was grandson of the great Condé, and afterwards first minister, 1723-1726.

true power was clearly not to reside in the Council. Then began a great reconstruction of the machinery of Government. Under the late reign, as we have seen, the King had aimed at keeping all administration in subjection to himself. The system was one of seven departments or bureaux; four old ones from previous reigns, and three new ones added in his time. The old ones were Justice, War, Finance, and the Royal Household, each with its 'chief-clerk' rather than minister; for the King aimed at fulfilling all the ministerial duties himself. The three new departments were Foreign Affairs, the Navy, the Colonies. It is significant of the state of the relations between the governor and the governed at this time that there was no Home Office, no 'Ministry of the Interior.' Things pertaining to this all-important branch of good government were divided between the Finance and the Household Departments; no wonder that between them the welfare of the French people received scanty attention. As usual it was,—we have seen it again and again in French history,—the Court and its extravagant pleasures first, then the war-power, then the people last of all, regarded as important only as being, not the objects for which governments exist, but the patient and all-bearing beast of burden which brought in supplies to the master.

Out of sight, under all and above all, had worked Louis XIV, laborious, and dull, swayed by his mistress, then by his minister, then by his wife. He always thought that he himself judged and ruled, believing innocently that all appointments were his own simple choice, while, as a fact, there was a well-understood system of 'forcing the card' on him, which rarely, if ever, failed to make him name the person whom Madame de Maintenon, or whoever was in power, might wish to see appointed. There was no independent action in all the state; not even were the grants of provincial Estates or of the clergy free; the Parliaments were humbly subservient, the States-General never convoked.

It was this system of organised deception that the Duke of Orleans proposed to reform by shifting the management

from the monarch to the noblesse. Following the lines laid down by the Duke of Burgundy[1], he now appointed six Councils (beside that of the Regency), each composed of ten men, chiefly persons chosen out of the old noblesse: the 'robe and pen,' law and literature, were to be kept down; the great feudal Houses should once more govern France. These six Councils occupied the ground taken by the old ministries, to a great extent. There was a Council of Finance; one of Foreign Affairs, one of War, one of the Navy; none specially for Justice, or for the Royal Household, or for the Colonies: instead, there was a Council of Conscience, which regulated all church-matters, and one of Home Affairs or of 'Despatches,' as it was styled, which was, in intention at least, a great improvement on the old system of leaving the internal welfare of the state to chance. Cardinal Noailles was named chief of the Council of Conscience,—a nomination which was in itself a revolution; for Noailles was known to be opposed to the domination of the Jesuits and 'Constitutionists'; and as theological unity had been the backbone of the system of Louis XIV, any relaxation in that direction was eminently significant. The partisans of the 'Constitution Unigenitus' were furious.

France, however, demanded more vigorous remedies than a system of somewhat feeble Councils could possibly give her. It may be true, as Saint-Simon avers, that the idleness of the Regent, who lived from hand to mouth, and the ambition of the Duke of Noailles, who wished the Councils to fail, even as Sully had laughed at a similar attempt under Henry IV, tended to render the whole system a failure. The reason of that failure, however, lay deeper down; it lay in the impossibility of securing vigorous reform and good prompt

[1] Saint-Simon claims for himself (viii. p. 214, 215) the honour of having first suggested this scheme of government. It is not improbable; so vehement a partisan of the noblesse might well have been pleased with imagining some such a scheme. He says the Duke of Orleans did not follow it out: 'Il n'en prit que le plus foible écorce.'

government out of a number of Boards composed in large part of noblemen untrained to anything like public business. Government by Boards is never a very satisfactory way of facing the difficulties of administration; even in quiet times and with well-ordered bodies, their action is slow, hesitating, lacking in bold initiative, feeble in execution: in such a state as France in 1715, and with Boards composed as these Councils were, there was nothing possible except failure: no besom could have been made so incapable of sweeping away abuses.

In other matters, the action of the Regent at the outset was humane and beneficent. The Jansenists, taking courage from the elevation of Cardinal Noailles, flocked back to Paris; there was talk of the convocation of a general Council, and of the independence of the Gallican Church. It was among the consequences of these halcyon dreams that Archbishop Wake was tempted, a little later, to enquire whether any basis could be found for the union of the two national Churches of France and England, in joint resistance to the ecclesiastical authority of Rome. The English Church, whether it would or not, was at the time penetrated with ideas of constitutional life; her bishops took prominent part in political affairs, and were accustomed to regard the established Church as an integral member of the state of England. On the other hand, the Gallican Church, attached as it might be to its 'liberties,' was wont neither to stand up boldly in the presence of her King nor to behave with independence towards the Papacy. Her share in the States-General, though more splendid in theory, had nothing of the practical importance enjoyed by the Anglican Bishops seated in Parliament.

The literary world revived; the Regent ordered Fénelon's Télémaque to be published at last; Voltaire's earliest efforts date from the Regency[1]; the Press teemed with attacks on the 'Constitution.' The Parliament recovered its rights of registra-

[1] Voltaire born in 1694, had been brought up by the Jesuits, and gave early signs of singular brilliancy. His Œdipus was first played in 1718.

tion; the legitimisation of the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse was annulled; the Jesuits were rendered powerless; Le Tellier, the true author of the 'Unigenitus,' was exiled. A sad troop of victims, immured for years, for causes known or unknown, for Jansenism, for opposition to the 'Constitution,' for resistance to the late King or his ministers, were set free: those only remained in prison who were there for crimes or really treasonable acts. Many a sad tragedy came to light; 'the victims of the hatred of ministers, or of the Jesuits and the heads of the Constitutionist party, horrified society by the condition in which they came forth from prison; their state lent credence to the terrible tales of cruelty which they related, when they once more breathed the air of liberty[1].' The Regent was with difficulty turned aside from his wish to recall the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and to throw open the gates of France to the exiled Huguenots: there were too many interests involved in their exclusion, and his good wishes remained unfulfilled.

In the provinces reigned a terrible depression and hopelessness: the institutions, which for a long time had kept alive the original and characteristic differences of the various parts of France, had decayed, and were become often worse than useless. There was however still a great distinction to be drawn between the 'Pays d'états[2]' and the 'Pays d'élection': the former were provinces in which the local Estates still had some authority; voting freely the amount to which they would be taxed by the Crown, calling it a 'gratuitous gift,' and arranging the incidence of it; also voting their local taxes, to cover local expenditure: the 'Pays d'élection,' had

[1] Saint-Simon, viii. p. 212.

[2] The Pays d'États were Languedoc, Brittany, Burgundy, Provence, Artois, Hainault, the Cambrésis, Béarn, Bigorre, Foix, Gex Bresse, Bugey, Valromey, Marsan, Nébouzan, the four valleys of Armagnac, and a few others. They were mostly the frontier districts, which had come late into the kingdom, and so doing had retained somewhat of their ancient rights and liberties. See Saint-Simon, vi. p. 247, note; and note in Hachette's ed. ix. p. 431. on the way in which the monarchy steadily encroached on the provincial liberties.

no such local right, the government being altogether centralised. These later were by far the more numerous. The scheme of the Duke of Burgundy had been to make all districts 'Pays d'états,' and as in these provinces noble immunities were strongest, the step would in fact have been another movement in favour of the aristocracy: while the uniformity of government arrived at would have simplified matters, a result dear to the French mind. From these newly established local Estates deputies should be sent up to Paris, and should form the basis of the States-General: in this way the Regent hoped to arrive at a real Parliamentary system. He hoped it: but it all ended in hopes.

Finally, we must add that this great revolution was entirely bloodless: the temperament of the Regent was against severity and vengeance: not even was Madame de Maintenon molested in that pretty nest she had so softly feathered for herself at S. Cyr.

Then began the period of the scandalous orgies called the 'Regent's little suppers': there, surrounded by his lively and abandoned comrades, his 'roués,' as he called them, giving a new name with which vice might mark her scorn of virtue, he spent the night in revelry, in which all that was immoral, impious, and blasphemous, surged up to heaven in loud and reckless tones. Here was no man to regenerate a sunken society: it may be true that he never let the unworthy companions of his debauches interfere with, or indeed know anything about, public affairs; yet it was soon seen that indolence, excess and drunkenness, were quickly making it impossible for the Regent to attend to the necessary business of the realm. Men soon found that he had no patriotism, no care for the public weal, that he was without any fixed plans as to government, that he was indifferent as to his country's troubles.

Two things, however, pressed, or would soon press. The first, which embarrassed everything from the beginning, was the state of the finances: the other, the foreign policy of the

country, which soon demanded attention, thanks to the unfriendly attitude of Spain, and Alberoni's grand ambition. For the first, the financial difficulty, the Regent tried first the plans of the Duke of Noailles, and then the schemes of the far more famous Law: for the second, the Regent had at his suppers a man destined to face the peril with a skill and suppleness worthy of Mazarin, with an utter contempt for political honesty, and with a keen eye for the security of the Regent. Dubois, as yet little but a boon companion, will soon prove himself more than a match for Alberoni: in the struggle between these adventurer-ministers, the two 'valets' who swayed Europe, we shall see the reactionary policy of Spain shattering itself against the obstacles raised by the Triple Alliance of 1717.

It is needless to say that the finances of the kingdom were in the utmost confusion. There was scarcely ready money enough to pay expenses from day to day: the 'Dixme Royal,' as imposed by Desmarets, had not been, as Vauban had proposed, a substitute for other and less uniform taxes; it was an addition to existing burdens, though levied from classes which had hitherto escaped. All that it brought in was thrown at once into the insatiate gulf of army and Court. There was a huge debt, over two thousand millions of livres, or more than eighty millions of guineas, at their then value: the collection of the taxes was a gigantic and wasteful business; the floating debt, in government paper, had fallen to about one third of its nominal value; the outgoings mounted up to two hundred and forty-three millions of livres, while the incomings were only one hundred and eighty-six millions; and moreover the revenue of the country had been anticipated by at least two years, after a fashion not unknown to modern spendthrifts drifting swiftly towards bankruptcy. All society was embarrassed; the sources of revenue and wealth were drying up, by the ruin of commerce, and the gradual return of the cultivated lands to waste. Nor had any one the least knowledge of the true sources of a country's wealth, or of sound and sensible

principles of finance. We shall soon see France a prey to a most tremendous and suicidal financial madness.

The Regent had to face difficulties and problems not unlike those which met Sully, when he brought the State through its difficulties by dint of strict severity with officials, and by encouragement to thrift and industry. Now the evils were far greater, the country more exhausted, the scale of expense more extravagant, the temper of the ruler very unheroic and self-indulgent. At his first accession to power he set the Duke of Noailles over the finance-council; and the Duke, well-meaning and ambitious, was scarcely strong enough to grapple with the evil. As Saint-Simon says, 'it would take great knowledge of finance, a vast and correct memory, and huge volumes written on this subject alone, to fit one to describe all that was now attempted, that failed, or that succeeded at this time[1].' The proud Duke himself had his own plan, a simple one: he begged the Regent to convoke the States-General, and by means of them to declare what was in fact a national bankruptcy: he argued that the only sufferers would be those wealthy financiers, so hateful to all, who, having become rich through the embarrassments of the State, might now fairly be made poor by the State's action: this would wash away the crushing debt, and an equilibrium in finance would follow. The Regent, however, had no desire to hamper himself with the States-General; his pride revolted from the thought of a bankruptcy; and he called on Noailles to come forward and leap into the yawning gulf of a deficit. The Duke was willing; and the town rang with terms and phrases worthy of Colbert's days. There should be retrenchment and rigid economy: the system of tax-gathering, the rate of interest on loans, the title-deeds of holders of the national debt, should be looked into; a 'Chambre ardente,' keen and searching, should take cognisance of the evil practices of financiers, and bring the culpable to justice. Offices created under Louis XIV, and purchased by their holders,

[1] Saint-Simon, viii. p. 255.

were swept away without compensation; it was an unjust confiscation, though it checked an offensive custom: the value of money was once more changed, an operation with which ignorance always hopes to relieve its necessity: the national debt was largely reduced by the vigorous care of the four brothers Paris, who now first appear; they were men of ability and probity, and the chief of the family, Joseph Paris-Duverney was found useful and trustworthy by the Court, now and often afterwards. The interest on the debt was arbitrarily fixed at four per cent; the 'Chambre ardente' struck terror into all hearts by its severities; the scaffold[1], the galleys, imprisonment, the loss of all property, were the penalties it delighted to inflict on these unhappy financiers, the scapegoats of national misconduct. Informers were encouraged; all who had had money-dealings with the government were stricken with terror. A great system of bribes sprang up; for the roués and their friends were always in want of money; and the wealthier financiers were able to shelter themselves under the wing of the Regent's associates.

At first these measures were popular, for society enjoyed hunting down those under whose hands it smarted, the wealthy money-lenders: after a time their pleasure cooled, when the severities passed all bounds, and it became clear that these stupid measures only increased the embarrassment of the State without for a moment relieving the pressure of taxation. Each step that had been taken had been an attack on the credit of the State: things went from bad to worse; and it was evident that the Duke of Noailles had failed.

Just at this time there presented himself to the Regent at Marly a Scot, by name John Law, the son of an Edinburgh jeweller and money-changer. His character was that of an immoral adventurer, who had lived by gambling, had fought his duels, had passed from capital to capital of Europe, hoping to gain acceptance for the schemes of finance and banking which occupied his busy brain. Repulsed elsewhere, he made

[1] Only in one case, however.

his way to Paris; and unhappily succeeded in gaining the Regent's ear, at the moment of the greatest anxiety and depression respecting the financial future of France.

Though there had long been a great and somewhat mysterious Bank at Amsterdam, still Scotland was the home of banking in the west of Europe. Paterson, who established the Bank of England in 1694, was a Scot; the Bank of Scotland was set up in 1695. We may regard Law as representing the adventurous cleverness of a Scot, who has got hold of some half-truths respecting the value and use of money and currency, and as to the relation a circulating medium bears to the actual wealth of a country. We must remember that the commercial system of the eighteenth century was still in its infancy, and that political economy was as yet unknown. The real value and use of paper-money, the natural limits of its safe issue, the effect of it on trade and national prosperity, were as yet things strange and untried. To these new points Law's attention had been directed: he thought that he had discovered the true Philosopher's Stone, which by doubling a nation's capital would enormously multiply its wealth and resources. Why, he argued, is Holland, with its wretched soil and dangerous shores, the wealthiest country in the world? Because of its immense circulating-medium. And other nations, by proper use of credit, and by establishing banks, may give to paper the value of coin, and enter on a new era of prosperity[1]. This great fallacy sank deep into Law's mind: he preached and urged it at all the capitals of Europe. At last poor drowning France, as at a straw, clutched at the flattering hope, and after a short delirium of fortune, which was utterly baseless and delusive, found herself worse off and more heart-sick than before.

Law saw clearly that paper issued without guarantee would fail; he therefore proposed to establish his bank on the basis of all the actual property of the state. The state has lands; let it issue paper up to their full value. In 1716 he received authority to establish a private bank, which won no small

[1] Thiers, Histoire de Law, pp. 14, 15.

credit, its bills being accepted by government, and the easy accommodation apparent. This Bank was dissolved in 1718 by the Regent, as the Government had now determined to take the whole affair into its own hands; Law was appointed Director-General of the new Royal Bank.

Then began the second period of Law's career. He was by no means satisfied with the great success his schemes had hitherto obtained: for he believed that there could be no limit to the expansion of credit and of the new paper-circulation. If with a capital of six million livres he had safely floated nearly tenfold that amount in notes and bills, why should he not, when backed up by the resources of the whole of France, be able to issue a sum of notes, as readily taken up, as firm in credit, and so large that it would enable the government to wipe away its debts and to set France once more in the way of prosperous life and rich productiveness? So he entered on his more gigantic and speculative schemes; he aimed at uniting all the wealth of France under one great management, and using it all as a basis for his issue of notes.

Hence sprang the famous Mississippi scheme, which was only one portion, and by no means the chief portion, of his plan. He desired to gather together under one vast company all the existing trading companies, all the great 'farms' of revenue, the royal Mint, the receipts of the royal income, and lastly the Bank. By this means he hoped to get the receipts and issues into the same hands: then with this vast basis of wealth, he would utter notes at will, more than double the circulating-medium, quicken trade and industry, replace the national debt with paper.

This was his great 'Company of the West,' with its two hundred thousand shares of five hundred livres each. He obtained a grant of Louisiana, which was rumoured to have unlimited mineral and agricultural wealth. The interior of North America was all but unknown: the Chevalier Lasalle, returning from his travels, had penetrated from Canada through Illinois, till he came to the grand stream of the Mississippi, and

had descended that river to the Gulf of Mexico. In the name of the French King he took possession of the territory through which he passed; giving it, in honour of Louis XIV, the name of Louisiana. It was described as marvellous in fertility. A colony sent thither failed: then Law, needing just such a dazzling and vague bait for his scheme, obtained a concession of the district in 1717; in 1718 the capital of Louisiana was founded, and named after the Regent, New Orleans. Law doubtless had something of the temper of his Scottish brethren, who had ventured all at Darien not so long before, and seemed to belie the proverbial coolness and shrewdness of their race by these far-reaching flights of reckless enterprise.

His shares were greedily taken up: his notes seemed to flush all France with instantaneous prosperity: the Company lent the King twelve hundred millions of livres, to pay off the debt. Paper money to the value of one hundred and ten millions of pounds sterling was struck off and circulated. In vain did the Parliament of Paris set itself against the stream: it was overborne at once, and as von Ranke says, 'an expansion was given to the centralised supreme power which Louis XIV had never possessed. Law even desired the abolition of a body which ventured to stand in his way: he was, as Montesquieu said of him, one of the greatest promoters of despotism that have ever lived[1].' A letter-writer in Paris at the time, who kept Archbishop Wake informed of the state of things, says that 'all the town was in convulsions over the shares:' 'the capital is thrown into a kind of state fever,' 'we see the debt diminish before our eyes, private fortunes are made out of nothing[2].' All sorts of tales had currency: one man ate a bill for a thousand livres at his breakfast: another, who had been a servant, bought a splendid equipage, and when it came to the door, from habit jumped up behind, as he had been wont to do. The Quincampoix street, in which the head-quarters of the

[1] L. von Ranke, Französische Geschichte, iv. p. 335.
[2] Girardin to Wake, Aug. 1719. Wake Papers, Christ Church Library, Oxford.

Company were, was witness to every excess of excitement and delirium. Law himself reaped a colossal fortune in paper, and turned it into land as fast as he could: in all he bought fourteen titled estates in France, a fact which testifies to his sincere belief in his own schemes; for had he been a mere swindler, he would have placed out his gains in other countries, certainly not in France. He was regarded as a great power in Europe: from England came his pardon; from Edinburgh the freedom of the city.

This, however, could not last long: the inexorable laws, which govern currency as well as every other thing, refused to be forced or set aside: it was observed that prices rose immensely and that there was a drain of specie from the bank; it disappeared from sight, hoarded or sent abroad. In vain did the government issue edicts against hoarding; it went on all the more. The shares which had fluctuated in a dangerous way now began to go steadily down.

When the Company first showed signs of being in difficulties, in February, 1720, it was attributed to Law's indisposition:—when he was well again, all would come right. But Law recovered, and the Company did not. Then the Government interfered; the Council decreed that the value of the Company's notes should be reduced one half: and that the shares should remain stationary at five hundred livres, as they had been issued. Such absurdities could only hasten the crisis. All credit gave way at once: Paris gave way to rage and desperation; the Regent's life was in danger. Forthwith the Bank stopped payment; and France awakening from her delirious dream, looked drearily out on the ruin that had befallen her[1]. Law, though threatened, remained in France to the end of the year;

[1] As usual all was tempered with epigrams:—

'Lundi, j'achetai des actions;
Mardi, je gagnai des millions;
Mercredi, j'arrangeai mon ménage;
Jeudi, je pris un équipage;
Vendredi, je m'en fus au bal;—
Et Samedi, à l'hôpital.'

then began once more his wandering life. His vast estates were all confiscated; he went from place to place neglected and deserted: in 1729 he died, with faith in his schemes and commercial principles unshaken, almost a pauper, at Venice. Nothing was done to repair this misfortune by careful finance. The Regent thought of calling together the States-General; but Dubois dissuaded him on the ground that the importunate griefs of the 'cahiers de doléance,' the 'quires of complaint,' 'had in them something sad, which a great King ought always to keep at a distance. . . . . the army might put down a recalcitrant Parliament;—how could it deal with a nation's remonstrances made through the States-General[1].' The States-General would have endangered Dubois' ascendancy; might have thwarted his political schemes: all his instincts of government were opposed to their convocation. The general result of this great disaster was a decided immediate increase of the despotic power of royalty, while, as naturally followed, it undermined the real authority of the Crown by making it virtually bankrupt: nor were the clergy unhurt by it; it also struck a heavy blow at the noblesse,—for it both destroyed what wealth they had, and fed with driest fuel their natural taste for extravagance, licence, and splendour. The effects on the trading classes is not so easy to be appraised; they probably gained as much as they lost.

While the 'Company of the West' was running its exciting and disastrous course in France, England was equally convulsed by the grand bubble-scheme of the 'South Sea Company[2];' and both countries found the year 1720 an unhappy epoch in their financial history. In France the ruin seemed far more thorough than in England: the whole state was involved in the affair; the credit of all was shaken. In England government

[1] Introduction au Moniteur (quoted by La Vallée, Histoire des Français, iii. p. 453, note 3).

[2] Law's Bank was made national in 1718, and the crash came early in 1720; Sir John Blunt's South Sea scheme was adopted by Mr. Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1719, was at its highest in the summer of 1720, and burst in that September. France, therefore, set the example, and the English mania was, to a large extent, based on the French.

had been more cautious; and when the crisis came, there were institutions able to bear and to relieve the strain. Walpole also was a good master of finance, and had been prudent both before and after the crash. In short, England was a rich country, and France, at this time, a poor one. The steps also taken by the two countries to meet the disaster were very different: while France only added to the confusion by grasping at and confiscating what she could of ill-gotten gains, Sir Robert Walpole used the solidity of the Bank of England and the East India House to stay the course of the ruin, by grafting a large portion of the South Sea stock on those institutions; there was also an honest enquiry; and as the assets, after all, were considerable, a dividend of one-third of the capital did something to mitigate the losses of subscribers. For all this, the ruin and misery spread very widely in both countries: it was an ill-omened beginning of the wonderful commercial expansion of this century.

In these years of financial experiment and trouble the French government had been far more successful with its external affairs. Under the sagacious guiding of Dubois, the Regency had not merely reversed the ancient policy of Louis XIV, but had united the chief powers of Europe in alliance against the ambitious plans of Spain, guided by Alberoni. That astute and successful adventurer reached the zenith of his power in 1715: he was a low-born Italian, and owed his advancement to his wit and to the patronage of the Duke of Vendôme, whom he followed into Spain: there he became agent to the Duke of Parma, and negociated the marriage of Elizabeth Farnese (who afterwards became heiress to the Duchy) with Philip V. This alliance was a revolution for Spain; the Princess des Ursins, hitherto all-powerful at Madrid, received orders to leave the country: and Alberoni rose immediately to the highest favour with his countrywoman the new Queen. She got him the red hat, the splendid position of grandee of Spain, the post of First Minister of the Crown. Nothing now seemed too hard for him: he formed the most splendid plans for the restoration of the influence of

Spain in Europe; he aimed especially at seating Philip V or his infant son, Don Carlos, on the throne of France. All the world believed that the puny little Louis XV had not long to live:—how could the Regent look on, and run the risk of exclusion from the succession?

To countervail the plans of Alberoni the Regent needed a minister, trustworthy, unscrupulous, fearless, resolute in action, capable of taking in the whole situation at a glance. And such a man was Dubois, his old preceptor. He had been with Tallard in London, and while there had drawn close to Secretary Stanhope, who was now at King George's right hand. Friendly negociations between the Courts of France and England went on at Paris, between Dubois and Stair, and were transferred to the Hague, when the English King went thither with Lord Stanhope. Dubois under a feigned name, giving out that he was gone to collect pictures and books, joined them there. Then began the negociations for the new Triple Alliance of England, France, and Holland: the Regent agreed to exclude the Pretender from France, and to abandon the new works at Mardyk: England agreed to guarantee the Succession-Articles of the Peace of Utrecht; certain commercial advantages were secured for Holland. The alliance was finally concluded early in January 1717. It was a first check to Alberoni, who had strained every nerve to win over George I to his side, while it enabled France to breathe freely, alarmed as she had been by the warlike tendencies and Italian expedition of the Spanish Court. Nothing was so much dreaded at Paris as a fresh war: the horrors of those twelve years of the Succession-War had left what seemed an indelible mark on France: the Regent would not join Spain in an assault on the Italian outworks of the Imperial power. On the contrary he saw in Philip V his most decided foe: their interests clashed, their views were opposed: the Spanish King befriended the Duke of Maine, the Pretender James, the relics of the old Court, the whole of that high Catholic party which in the last years of Louis XIV had been all-powerful in France.

Therefore he was determined by all means to secure both peace for France, and shelter from Alberoni's ambitious schemes. For this end he despatched Dubois again to England, who with such extraordinary skill and suppleness handled matters that he even succeeded in inducing the Emperor to join the allies: Charles VI agreed to the terms of a new convention, by which he was left free to attack Spain and take what he could from her. In the latter part of 1718 the Quadruple Alliance was signed, and Alberoni's projects at once fell with him. He had, just before this, been detected in a plot against the Regent's life: the Spanish ambassador, Cellamare, was conducted out of France; the Duke of Maine, Cardinal Polignac, and other leaders of the high Catholic party were imprisoned[1].

This was the moment at which the abilities of Dubois had fullest sway: his instincts were all despotic, his ambition aimed at complete power for himself, at dominance over France, in church and state, and after that, possibly, at the Papal throne. In 1718 having persuaded the Regent that the famous Councils were not working well, he got rid of them, by a kind of coup d'état, and seized for himself the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Things now were ripe for war, little as France desired it. Alberoni's schemes had taken the form of a seizure of Sardinia and Sicily; Austria, thanks to the Peace of Passarowitz (21 July, 1718), which relieved her from fear of the Turks, was at liberty to attend to her menaced interests in the Mediterranean. In vain did Alberoni try by means of the Pretender to neutralise England, and through the malcontents in France to stop the Regent: in vain had he even negociated,—strange change! —at Constantinople, hoping to retard the signature of the Peace with Austria: in vain did the old Court-party resist the

[1] 'The late vigorous proceedings of the Court against the D. du Maine, who is at the head of the Sp. Faction and the Jesuits, and against the petulancy of the Parliament have stirred up the enemies of the present government, and so hath the British Squadron in the Mediterranean, whose success they will not as yet believe.' Wm. Beauvoir, in Wake MSS., Aug. 1718.

proposal to declare war with Spain, d'Huxelles, the Duke of Maine, Villeroy, all alike protesting strongly against it; though they were numerically the larger party in the council, Dubois carried all before him: war broke out all along the line.

Before this the English fleet under Admiral Byng had been sent into the Mediterranean to protect Italy. Without a declaration of war, he had crushed the Spanish navy at Syracuse (11 Aug. 1718): now, at the very end of the year, and by February 1719, war had been declared by England, France, and Holland against Spain. Marshal Berwick, who in former days had set Philip V on his throne, was now sent to dislodge him: he fought with as much fidelity against him now as he had shown on his behalf in the Succession War. He crossed the Pyrenees at their western end, and took Fontarabia and Saint Sebastien, while the French fleet, acting on the wish of England, destroyed the Spanish dockyards at Port au Passage near the Bidassoa, and at Santona. Byng in the Mediterranean and the French fleet in the Bay of Biscay, utterly ruined the Spanish naval power, and cleared the way for the dominance of England on the seas during this century. Meanwhile the Imperialists, transported in British ships, recovered Sicily.

The war was barely begun when all felt the need of peace: it was idle for Spain to struggle against the allied powers; the war was unpopular in France, and the costs of it very heavy; England had gained largely; Austria had recovered her Italian possessions. While Alberoni remained at Madrid peace was not possible; and the current of affairs accordingly required his fall: in the end of 1719 he withdrew into Italy, where he died forgotten. Spain then came in to the terms of the Quadruple Alliance: the Treaty of London (17 February, 1720) closed this brief splash of European war. Sicily was secured to the Emperor, Sardinia annexed to Savoy. With Alberoni's fall, all his great plans for the revival of Spain came utterly to an end; and that ancient monarchy once more folded its hands in sleep.

All through these days the great 'Constitutionist' quarrel

had gone drearily on; the Constitutionists for a time lost ground; their antagonists, the 'Appellants,'—those, that is, who appealed to a general council of the Church, against the imposition by the Papacy of the 'Constitution Unigenitus,'—were able to establish a considerable number of bishops of their party in France; and so long as the Court supported them, all sorts of dreams were dreamt: men talked vaguely of a Patriarchate, of the independence of the Gallican Church, of union with the Church of England. The ambition of Dubois changed all this; while he was in opposition to Rome he could not hope to resemble Richelieu, as he fondly thought he might, both in policy and in honours; and in presence of this ambition, the face of Church affairs was forced to change. Dubois became a warm supporter of the 'Unigenitus': Archbishop Noailles, a man opposed to all partisan-measures and persons, was actually reconciled to the Constitutionists early in 1720.

And now the acute and eager Minister of Foreign Affairs took his first step in church dignities: by the mediation of George I, who certainly owed much to Dubois, the Regent, not a little amused at the contrast between the character of the immoral statesman and the saintly virtues which seemed necessary for the prelate who should sit in Fénelon's seat[1], granted to Dubois the Archbishopric of Cambrai, which now again was vacant. He was only a deacon, and had therefore to be ordained priest, the great Massillon himself vouching for the purity of his morals and his theological knowledge! Then followed unwearied intrigues and plentiful corruption at all courts and at Rome: the new Archbishop's purse was full and overflowed: threats, hypocrisies, blandishments were lavished on his old foes the Jesuits, severities dealt out to his old friends the Jansenists; the friendly interference of the Protestant George I; the prayers of his Catholic rival James 'the Pretender[2]'; the good

[1] He had died in 1715.

[2] It is said that the guineas of George I were actually used to purchase the Pretender's help!

word of the Emperor who was intent on his own interests; the good offices of the King of Spain:—all Europe was enlisted for this red hat[1]; never had a hat cost so much in baseness and in money; it is said that its price in hard cash amounted to eight million of livres. Yet Clement XI held out; he escaped the scandal only by dying[2]: then Dubois' influence obtained the tiara for one of his creatures; the long-expected hat was sent in return (July, 1721). It was said that one Pope had died to escape the scandal of making this appointment, and that his successor, Innocent XIII, died of a broken heart after making it[3]. 'The rejoicings at Brive-la-Gaillarde, the place of the Cardinal du Bois' nativity, on account of his being advanced to the purple, have proved fatal to the church of that place—which was set on fire by some of the fire-works, and was burnt to the ground. I need not add that this is looked on as a sort of Omen by the superstitious[4].'

The omen did not fulfil itself in any way: the last two years of Dubois' life were splendid and successful. He had a fine field on which to exercise his special gifts, and this copper Richelieu was as bright as if he had been of gold. He grouped all powers and interests around the Regency: his personal ambition now fully gratified, all disadvantages of birth and early avocations cloaked by his high dignities in Church and State, his scandalous immoralities forgotten, Dubois aspired to be the great minister of a reviving State. He had checked Spain, and had overthrown his rival Alberoni: like Reynard after his supreme struggle with Isengrim, he seemed

[1] The uncertainty about it paralysed the world: 'The chief reason why all the affairs of Europe stand as it were still by the delay—that Prelate not being willing to have them settled before he has gained his point, lest the Princes concerned, who have now some occasion for his good offices, should then be less zealous to promote his pretentions.' Wake MSS.

[2] He is reported to have replied to one application, 'Que cette affaire-là méritait bien qu'on y pensât avec maturité; que le Sacré Collège étoit *farci de gens sans naissance et sans mérite.*' Girardin, 19 July 1721. Wake MSS.

[3] Clement XI died March 19, 1721; Innocent XIII died March 7, 1724; so that he took nearly three years over this broken heart.

[4] Ayerst, Wake MSS.

to have the whole world at his feet. England and Spain, George I and the Pretender, Constitutionists or Appellants, were all to be reconciled through him. In August 1722 he was named First Minister of the Crown: the French Academy elected him to one of its august chairs; the clergy in convocation made him its president.

He had the most exalted ideas as to the dignity and power of First Minister, 'an authority,' as he said, 'which seems to have no bounds in itself; on the contrary it appears to be the same with that of the Prince, for the First Minister is his organ in all things[1].' He removed Louis XV to Versailles, to free him from Parisian influences: he got rid of the obstinate Villeroy, the King's preceptor and last relic of the old opposition to the Regent, and banished him. When in February 1723 Louis XV, at the age of thirteen, attained, according to French usage, to his majority, the authority of Dubois seemed absolutely established: the lazy Duke of Orleans was well-content that it should be so. The system of 'despotism without glory' seemed likely to last for years[2].

Thus Dubois reached the topmost pinnacle of his high ambitions, and all seemed straight and smooth before him. No man however can cut himself off from the consequences of his earlier career; and death seems to lay his snares with humorous attention to the contrasts life provides. It seemed good to the Cardinal to review the Maison du Roy, the King's body-guards: a slight accident befell him, and he was carried to Versailles. To a healthy man it would have been nothing: but the Archbishop's debauches had ruined his constitution; an attempted operation brought him suddenly to the grave.

The Duke of Orleans, so closely bound up with him, now accepted the vacant post of First Minister: his health was gone; and his excesses, mere habit now,—there could have been no days of pleasure left him,—were fast leading him

[1] Quoted, from a MS. Memoir, by L. von Ranke, Französische Geschichte, iv. p. 345, note 1.

[2] Martin, Histoire de France, xv. p. 116.

also to the tomb; four months after Dubois' death, he was smitten with the apoplectic stroke from which he never rallied.

These eight years of the Regency were unfortunate for France: financial disorders, moral scandals, the want of public spirit, vice seated in highest place, the foreign policy of the country subordinated to that of England:—these things form the vestibule to the long reign of Louis XV.

CHAPTER II.

FLEURY. A.D. 1724–1740.

THE death of Philip of Orleans marks the beginning of a new period. Monarchy, wellnigh effaced before, is still left in obscurity; it has destroyed all wholesome political life in France, only at last to be overwhelmed beneath the ruins. Louis XV sincerely mourned the Duke of Orleans, who had treated him with much respect, had watched over his political education with great care, even teaching him, as far as he could, the theory of government and its branches: Massillon had been employed to give the boy those splendid lessons in morals which could scarcely have come well from the Regent's lips. To what end? The young King was a hopeless subject; cold-blooded, timid and hard at once, —no uncommon combination,—of a dry and soulless nature, with low and vulgar tastes, and a character which passed from a cold indifference to a still colder libertinism. He loved retirement, not for contemplation's sake, but first for indolence, then for vice. Indolence and selfishness in their most ghastly developments were not the qualities which France, now brought so low, needed in her absolute Prince.

For about three years Fleury, Bishop of Fréjus[1], who had

[1] There were two Fleurys, to be carefully distinguished. The elder, the Abbé Claude (b. 1640, d. 1723), was sub-preceptor to the royal childen, under Fénelon's eye; in 1717 he was made Confessor to Louis XV. He was an Academician, and a voluminous writer. His chief work is his Ecclesiastical History, which he carried down only to 1414. The younger, André Hercule (b. 1653, d. 1743), was the Minister and Cardinal with whom we have to do. He had been almoner to Louis XIV, then in 1698 Bishop of

been the young King's preceptor and possessed his fullest confidence, allowed the Duke of Bourbon, 'Monsieur le Duc,' as he was styled, an ugly one-eyed personage, of brutal mind and manners, a man of no character, greedy, debauched, narrow-minded, the slave of his mistress the Marquise de Prie, who, in her turn, was a pensioner of Walpole, to fill the post of First Minister. It is an obscure and dreamy time, marked only by the overthrow of the marriage-scheme planned to obviate the dangers of the Quadruple Alliance. The Infanta was harshly sent back to Spain[1]; and the Marquise de Prie set herself to find a more useful Queen for her purposes: the daughter of the ex-King of Poland, Stanislaus Leczinski, who was now living in obscurity at Weissenberg, was her choice. Her the young King married in September, 1725.

The rule of this Bourbon clique was soon seen to be vain and odious. In June 1726, Fleury, feeling the time come, ejected them from power, and himself grasped the reins. The duke and the mistress were exiled.

The ministry of Fleury may be regarded as a counter-reaction from the principles of the Regency towards those of the later days of Louis XIV. The Jesuits had been restored to France by Dubois, when it suited him to conciliate the Church abroad, and were close friends with the elderly Bishop of Fréjus; under their guidance the old strife of Constitutionist and Appellant was ere long settled against the Jansenists, who were after all only the somewhat degenerate descendants of the old followers of Jansen. The strife of the parties, worn-out squabbles over extinct questions, roused the pitiful derision of France, and strengthened the growing forces of unbelief.

Among the portraits of the new minister is one which was doubtless engraved with an eye to the late ministers, Dubois, the Duke of Orleans, and the Duke of Bourbon. Diogenes, in search

Fréjus, then nominated by the dying King as preceptor to Louis XV. In 1726 he became First Minister and Cardinal.

[1] She was only six years old.

as ever for the honest man, has found him, has had his portrait taken, and with lantern in one hand and picture-frame in the other, presents Fleury to our admiring gaze. There is enough of truth to justify it. The old minister was upright and disinterested; he worked hard and was careful over the nation's expenditure. He makes it his boast that in bringing up his royal pupil he had ever told him the truth, however unpalatable it might be. His accession to power was welcomed by all France, which trusted him and believed in his honesty.

And yet his home-ministry has remained obscure; for the old man was narrow and of limited horizon, and had no general grasp of politics or government. Though he got all power into his hands, with unbounded influence over the young King,—so much so that the Princes of the blood, and even the Queen herself, had to take their orders from him,—still his career is not great. With his keen knowledge of the world came a certain timidity; for age had brought not wisdom but wariness. He undertook no reforms, and was content if he could quiet the evils of the state without attempting to destroy them: his rule was not strong for good or evil; if no great reforms mark it, still it is free from exacting tyranny. The people were relieved from some burdens of taxation; the credit of the state recovered itself; it was in Fleury's days that the fluctuation in the value of coin at last came to an end; the well-known brothers Paris reappeared, and with their great financial skill did good service to the government. Trade and commerce revived with amazing quickness; the flag of France was seen in every Levantine port; her East India Company flourished again.

It was in his foreign relations that Fleury, made a Cardinal in 1726, has left his mark on his country's history. It is true that even here his policy and diplomacy were of the 'hand-to-mouth' order; and as an Italian of the day[1] remarks, 'the knowledge of circumstances is the true way of governing and of advantaging kingdoms; and the Cardinal knows how to recognise

[1] Fr. Venier, Relazione, 1740, quoted by von Ranke, Franz. Geschichte, iv. p. 365, note 1.

the moment for it.' Dexterously to catch the movement of the day, and to turn it to the gain of France was his gift: neither higher statesmanship, nor a grasp of general principles, nor lordship over circumstances, formed part of Fleury's administration; he watched the balance of the states, and, adjusting himself accordingly, took and gained advantage from that middle position which France can hold so well.

The characteristic of the time is the great advance in the power and influence exerted on European politics by the Northern Courts. The rapid rise, first of Prussia under the great Elector, next of Russia under Peter the Great, completely altered the balance; Sweden dropped back, Poland became of the first importance, Austria had to adjust herself to new conditions, and to find interests as important in Silesia and on the Polish frontier as in Naples or Milan. Her relations to France and Spain change during this time. The interests of England are similarly affected and complicated; she finds her Hanoverian connexion embarrassing; she has to choose between Prussia and Austria, to watch over a thousand changing conditions of commerce and navigation. She is called during this half century to begin a new period of life; she rises, by the exhaustion of Holland, by the concentration of France on her continental interests and her general weakness, by the destruction of the Spanish sea-power and commerce, thanks also to the undeveloped ambitions of Russia, to a decided supremacy on the high seas, to broader aims, to imperial enterprises in the eastern and western world. Now begins the age in which she dominates in America, founds her empire in India, discovers a new world in Australia, until, at the beginning of this present century, she becomes possessor of the Cape, and begins her great career in Africa.

In the southern world of politics the period may be held to begin with the struggles of the Emperor Charles VI to impose his 'Pragmatic Sanction[1]' on Europe. In 1725 the Congress

[1] The world-famous Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VI was first issued in 1713; in it he declared his eldest daughter, Maria Theresa, heiress of all

of Cambrai was held, under mediation of France and England, to adjust outstanding differences between Spain and Austria, which had divergent interests in Italy. There a curious whirl of political groups suddenly took place; Charles VI was angry with England, because she refused to guarantee the solemn 'Sanction,' and Philip V with France, because of the slight put on him by the sudden and almost contemptuous breach of the marriage-compact: it was also offensive to think that France cared more for Polish than for Spanish interests. These two powers, thus moved by a common irritation, Austria against England, Spain against France, made an unexpected union[1], and drew out far-reaching plans. They would tear off all the accretions of France from every frontier; the Empire should recover Alsace, Franche-Comté, Lorraine, the Netherlands; Spain should have Roussillon, Brittany, Lower Navarre. All Europe at once grouped itself round the two parties; with France and England went Holland, Denmark, Sweden; with Austria and Spain were Russia and Prussia[2]. The English fleets put out to sea; Philip V at once besieged Gibraltar; a general war seemed imminent.

Europe, however, was in no real humour for war; peace-ministers ruled at Paris and S. James'; and prudent Fleury, 'pulveris exigui jactu,' by the simple action of diplomacy, stilled the fervid minds of the antagonists, and brought back peace. The Congress of Soissons in 1729 arranged the points at issue: Don Carlos, Philip's son, was declared heir to the Duchies of Parma and Piacenza; this was the signal that Spain had detached herself from Austria—their Italian rivalries proving too strong a solvent for their new-cemented friendship,—and on the

his states: it was to obtain the guarantee of the European powers to this document (which was soon shown to be powerless after his death) that all the Emperor's efforts were directed.

[1] Negociated by another adventurer, this time a Dutchman from Gröningen, Ripperda; after his fall he became a Mussulman.

[2] Prussia sided at first with France and England (League of Herrenhausen, 1725); she soon, however, withdrew and joined the two Emperors (Treaty of Wusterhausen, 1726). This is the beginning of the many treaties between these three powers, Austria, Prussia, Russia.

death of the last Farnese duke, the Emperor seized the Duchies. England and France then interfered, and offering, in concert with Spain, to guarantee the great Pragmatic Sanction, Charles VI could not resist the bait; he accepted their terms, surrendered the Duchies to Don Carlos (A.D. 1731), and went away rejoicing with his worthless paper-guarantees. Fleury had the satisfaction of appearing as mediator and umpire in the quarrels of Europe.

No sooner was the South of Europe thus quietly settled, than a far more serious trouble broke out in the North. We must go back a few years, and trace the progress of events; for this period was one of the highest importance to the northern nations; new relations mark the movements of the South of Europe, while new creations characterise the North. Charles XII and Peter the Great had striven for the mastery; the old lords of the Baltic being jealous of the new invader. The plans and views of Charles were colossal, romantic; they evoked unheard-of energies and drove Sweden, as with the sting of some mad enthusiasm, to attempt great things far beyond her strength: the true power and greatness of Peter lay in the fact that, grand as were his projects, they all were within his reach, and all were realised, so as to affect Europe thenceforward for ever. Charles therefore led Sweden to her fall: Peter roused Russia to new life, and set her in her great European career. We may well regret the fate of war and politics, which deposed the hardy Scandinavians from their command of the Baltic, loosened their hold on European politics, and gave to Russia her chances of unlimited expansion.

In 1718, but a few months before Charles XII met his fate at Fredrikshald on the Norwegian frontier, Sweden had made a secret agreement with Russia under guidance of Baron Goertz, by which the Swedes were to be indemnified for their losses to Russia at the expense of the weaker states, Norway and Hanover. The death of Charles, and consequent execution of Goertz, entirely changed the aspect of affairs: a rupture took place with Russia: Sweden now allied herself with England,

and with her help made peace, at no small sacrifice, with all her neighbours except Russia: treaties were signed with Hanover, Denmark, Poland and Prussia.

France and England were, in a way, engaged to help Sweden to make a moderate peace with Russia: Peter however was too swift and strong for them. England had secured Bremen and Verden for Hanover, and took little trouble to defend her weakened ally; the British fleet left the Baltic, and Peter, invading Sweden, inflicted unheard-of sufferings: atrocities of the worst kind were committed with barbaric fury; towns burnt, hundreds of villages destroyed, women and children horribly massacred, the whole wealth of the kingdom sacked by these Oriental barbarians: all Europe stood aghast at so great a crime perpetrated against a Christian and civilised people; France interposed her mediation, and Russia had the satisfaction of seeing her brutal vigour rewarded with full success at the Peace of Nystadt. Sweden there ceded to her all she possessed on the Gulf of Finland, that is, Liefland, Esthland, and Ingermanland on the south of the gulf, Carelia, part of Wiborg on the north, together with the great islands Oesel and Dagoe, outside the gulf, and all other islands from the borders of Kurland to Wiborg (Sept. 1721).

From this moment Russia becomes an important factor in the affairs of Europe. Peter's new capital of S. Petersburg, founded in 1703, was now seen to be part of a great plan for the command of the Baltic: Russian fleets, the Swedish power being annihilated, henceforth lord it over that sea, so long as they in turn are not conquered by the inexorable powers of winter. It was now that Peter crowned his edifice by proclaiming himself Emperor with fresh solemnity; he stood forth, not only overshadowing all Northern Europe, but as claiming the memories of the Eastern Empire: the old Headship of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe was now confronted with a new and barbarously vigorous Headship, which, though it might not at first make itself much felt except in the north, was destined inevitably, as the champion of Eastern Christendom, to spread

and grow, until Europe and Asia alike should feel the outer movements of its power.

Side by side with this new power rose the state which is destined to become its counterpoise in Europe, Prussia. It was during these years that the young kingdom, with its weak geographical borders and poor and barren soil, organised that powerful monarchy, built up on its thrift and its army, which was destined ere long to startle Europe into a recognition of its great importance. Unity of administration under a strong King is the secret of the triumphs of Frederick the Great, though we must not forget the solid worth of a patient, well-ordered, and brave nation.

Between these states lay the much-afflicted far-extending polity of Poland. Devastated by wars, civil and foreign; torn by religious differences; governed, if the word may be used, under an impossible constitution, administered by most unfit hands; Poland was certain to be an embarrassment and a temptation to all her neighbours. We shall presently see that the old difficulties about her elective kingship will draw France again towards her; not with the feebleness of the days of Henry of Anjou, but with new and far more critical influence on the adjustment of the balance of European politics.

Thus matters stood, when it became clear that before long a struggle would take place for the Crown of Poland, in which the powers of Europe must interest themselves very closely. Two parties will compete for that uneasy throne: on the one side will stand the northern powers, supporting the claims of the House of Saxony, which was endeavouring to make the Crown hereditary and to restrict it to the Saxon line; on the other side we shall find France alone, desiring to retain the old elective system, and to place on the throne some prince, who, much beholden to her, should cherish French influences, and form a centre of resistance against the dominance of the northern powers. England stands neutral: the other powers are indifferent or exhausted. With a view to the coming difficulty, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, made a secret agreement in 1732, by which

they bound themselves to resist all French influences in Poland. With this pact begins that system of nursing and interferences with which the three powers pushed the 'sick man of the North' to its ruin; it is the first stage towards the Partition-treaties.

Early in 1733 Augustus II of Poland died: the Poles, dreading these powerful neighbours, and drawn, as ever, by a subtle sympathy towards France, at once took steps to resist dictation, declared that they would elect none but a native prince, sent envoys to demand French help, and summoned Stanislaus Leczinski to Warsaw. Leczinski had been the protégé of Charles XII, who had set him on the Polish throne in 1704; with the fall of the great Swede the little Pole also fell (1712); after some vicissitudes he quietly settled at Weissenburg, whence his daughter Marie went to ascend the throne of France as spouse of Louis XV (1725). Now in 1733 the national party in Poland re-elected him their King, by a vast majority of votes: there was, however, an Austro-Russian faction among the nobles, and these, supported by strong armies of Germans and Russians, nominated Augustus III of Saxony to the throne: he had promised the Empress Anne to cede Courland to Russia, and Charles VI he had won over by acknowledging the Pragmatic Sanction.

War thus became inevitable: the French majority had no strength with which to maintain their candidate against the forces of Russia and Austria; and France, instead of affording Stanislaus effective support at Warsaw, declared war against Austria. The luckless King was obliged to escape from Warsaw, and took refuge in Danzig, expecting French help: all that came was a single ship and fifteen hundred men, who, landing at the mouth of the Vistula, tried in vain to break the Russian lines. Their aid thus proving vain, Danzig capitulated, and Stanislaus, a broken refugee, found his way, with many adventures, back to France: Poland submitted to Augustus III. Fleury had entirely failed to grasp the importance of these northern affairs.

In his war against Austria, which now broke out, he showed

more vigour: he struck at the Rhine and at Italy, while the other powers looked on unmoved; Spain watching her moment, at which she might safely interfere for her own interests in Italy. The army of the Rhine, which reached Strasburg in autumn 1733, was commanded by Marshal Berwick, who had been called away from eight years of happy and charming leisure[1] at Fitz-James. With him served for the first time in the French army their one great general of the coming age, and he too a foreigner, Maurice, son of Augustus II of Poland and the lovely Countess of Königsmark. He had been first trained under the great Prince Eugene: then he passed into France, and became the French candidate for the Duchy of Courland: thence, not having been recognised by the Empress Catherine I, he returned to France, and began his career in these campaigns. He is best known to us as Marshal Saxe.

It was too late to accomplish much in 1733, and the French had to content themselves with the capture of Kehl: in the winter the Imperialists constructed strong lines at Ettlingen, a little place not far from Carlsruhe, between Kehl, which the French held, and Philipsburg at which they were aiming. In the spring of 1734 French preparations were slow and feeble: a new power had sprung up at Paris in the person of Belle-Isle, Fouquet's grandson, who had much of the persuasive ambition of his grandfather. He was full of schemes, and induced the aged Fleury to believe him to be the coming genius of French generalship; the careful views of Marshal Berwick suited ill his soaring spirit; he wanted to march headlong into Saxony and Bohemia[2]. Berwick would not allow so reckless a scheme to be adopted; still Belle-Isle, as lieutenant-general with an almost independent command, was sent to besiege Trarbach on the Moselle, an operation which delayed the French advance on the Rhine.

[1] The Duke of Bourbon had deprived him in 1724 of his government of Guyenne.

[2] He clung to this idea, and in the Austrian Succession-war actually penetrated to Prague.

At last however, Berwick moved forwards. By skilful arrangements he neutralised the Ettlingen lines, and without a battle forced the Germans to abandon them. Their army withdrew to Heilbronn, where it was joined by Prince Eugene. Berwick, freed from their immediate presence, and having a great preponderance in force, at once sat down before Philipsburg. There on the 12th of June, as he visited the trenches, he was struck by a ball and fell dead. So passed away the last but one of the great generals of Louis XIV: France never again saw his like till the genius of the Revolution evoked a new race of heroes.

It was thought at first that Berwick's death, like Turenne's, would end the campaign, and that the French army must get back across the Rhine. The position seemed critical, Philipsburg in front, and Prince Eugene watching without. The Princes of the Empire, however, had not put out any strength in this war, regarding it chiefly as an Austrian affair; and the Marquis d'Asfeld, who took the command of the French forces, was able to hold on, and in July to reduce the great fortress of Philipsburg. Therewith the campaign of the Rhine closed.

In Italy things had been carried on with more vigour and variety. The veteran Villars, now eighty-one years old, was in command, under Charles-Emmanuel, King of Sardinia. The old man was rough, boastful, the spoilt child of Courts: three Queens[1], one with her own hand, gave him cockades for his hat. They indulged him and bore with all his rudeness, much in the way in which Englishmen used to put up with the eccentric coarseness of some 'old salt': it was the way of the old school; these oaths and oddities, no doubt, were potent to win great victories.

Villars found it quite easy to occupy all the Milanese: farther he could not go; for Charles-Emmanuel, after the manner of his family, at once began to deal behind his back with the Imperialists, and the campaign dragged. The old

[1] France, Savoy, Spain.

Marshal, little brooking interference and delay, for he still was full of fire, threw up his command, and started for France: on the way he was seized with illness at Turin, and died there, five days after Berwick had been killed at Philipsburg. With them the long series of the generals of Louis XIV comes to an end.

Coigny and the Duke de Broglie succeeded to the command. Not far from Parma they fought a murderous battle with the Austrians, hotly contested, and a Cadmean victory for the French: it arrested their forward movement, and two months were spent in enforced idleness. In September 1734 the Imperialists inflicted a heavy check on the French at the Secchia; afterwards, however, emboldened by this success, they fought a pitched battle at Guastalla, in which, after a fierce struggle, the French remained masters of the field. Their losses, the advanced time of the year, and the uncertainty as to the King of Sardinia's movements and intentions, rendered the rest of the campaign unimportant.

As however the Imperialists, in order to make head against the French in the valley of the Po, had drawn all their available force out of the Neapolitan territory, the Spaniards were able to slip in behind them, and to secure that great prize. Don Carlos landed at Naples and was received with transports of joy: the Austrians were defeated at Bitonto; the Spaniards then crossed into Sicily, which also welcomed them gladly; the two kingdoms passed willingly under the rule of the Spaniards[1].

In 1735 Austria made advances in the direction of peace; for the French had stirred up their old friend the Turk, who, in order to save Poland, proposed to invade Hungary. Fleury, no lover of war, and aware that England's neutrality could not last for ever, was not unwilling to treat: a Congress at Vienna

[1] In 1713 the two kingdoms had been severed by the Treaty of Utrecht, Charles retaining Naples, and Victor Amadeus of Savoy having Sicily. In 1720 Victor Amadeus exchanged Sicily for Sardinia, and the 'Two Sicilies' were reunited in favour of the House of Austria; this was now reversed in favour of the Spanish Bourbons, and continued so till the days of Napoleon.

followed, and before the end of 1735 peace again reigned in Europe. The terms of the Treaty of Vienna (3 Oct. 1735)[1] were very favourable to France. Austria ceded Naples and Sicily, Elba, and the States degli Presidii to Spain, to be erected into a separate kingdom for Don Carlos: France obtained Lorraine and Bar, which were given to Stanislaus Leczinski on condition that he should renounce all claim to the Polish Crown; they were to be governed by him under French administration: Francis Stephen the former Duke obtained, as an indemnity, the reversion of Tuscany, which fell to him in the following year. Parma and Piacenza returned to the Emperor, who also obtained from France a guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction.

Thus France at last got firm hold of the much-desired Lorraine country, though it was not absolutely united to her till the death of Stanislaus in 1766: it secured her eastern frontier, which without it had been vulnerable and weak. Now with possession of Alsace on the one side and the Three-Bishoprics on the other, France secured the whole of that woodland mountainous district which commands the plain of Champagne on the one hand and that of the Rhine on the other: how different might have been the fortunes of revolutionary France, half a century later, had the émigrés and the Germans been able to set out on their mission of repression from Nanci instead of the Rhine! The Turks pressed hard on the weakened rear of Austria: it was Fleury's hand which, in 1739, dictated the Peace of Belgrade, a striking admission of the extreme feebleness of the House of Austria.

These things made Fleury appear before the world as the arbiter of Europe[2]: his successful cabinet-diplomacy had won great and solid triumphs for France. Her borders were enlarged, commerce revived, especially in the Mediterranean and the East; her East India Company grew rapidly[3]; her population

[1] Sardinia did not come in till 1 May, 1736; Spain not till 15 Nov. 1736.
[2] L. von Ranke, Franz. Geschichte, iv. p. 366.
[3] The French settlements in India increased much at this time; the Isle de Bourbon and Isle de France became, the former a rich agricultural

increased. Yet society was no better, nor were the people happier than before; the Court was more and more corrupt; the King was now beginning that ghastly career of libertinism and debauch which crowned the abominable corruption of the age, and have rendered his name a bye-word to posterity. Nor had Fleury's prudence and economy saved France from suffering, though he had succeeded in making the income and expenditure balance, or nearly so. The taxes pressed with ever-grinding severity on the country districts, where revenue-farmers and agents oppressed, unchecked, the simple folk; it was at this time, too, that Fleury introduced that scourge of France, which has left its indelible mark on the popular mind, the corvée[1]. It is said that to this day the peasantry vote against Legitimist candidates for the Assembly, in the strong belief that were the Bourbons to come in again they would reimpose this most hated badge of servitude. And yet the corvée was imposed at first in the interests of the national prosperity: in 1733 Fleury, seeing that the old roads throughout France were in bad condition, and that many districts still required opening up, determined to grapple with so great a task: the state should build the bridges, make the cuttings, lay out the best lines, while the country was to do the rest. The Intendants of the different provinces were quietly instructed to compel the villagers and peasants, along all the lines of road, to give their own labour, that of their beasts, and the use of their carts, for the making, repairing, keeping up of the highways. It was an Egyptian bondage, inflicted by an Egyptian despotism. No formalities of government, even the most absolute, were used, no edict issued, no order in Council, no proclamation: this crushing burden was

colony, the latter the strong naval port commanding the Indian seas. Voltaire tells us that at the close of the reign of Louis XIV France had only 300 merchant ships, in 1738 she had 1800.

[1] The Corvée [Low Lat. *corvada*, *corrogata*, from *con-* and *rogare*, opera corrogata, work done at command] was an ancient feudal tax levied by the lord on his peasants, who had to give him their gratuitous labour certain days; thus in the fifteenth century 'chasune charrue paierat chasun an trois journées à la crowée de la charrue.' See Du Cange, *corvagium*; and Littré, *corvée*.

stealthily laid on the land, and those entrusted with the charge of it were empowered to inflict arbitrary punishment on any wretched peasant who hesitated to obey[1].

If we would see what the result was, and how the evils grew which at last led to the overthrow of the monarchy, we must read the Memoirs of the Marquis D'Argenson[2], who draws with unsparing hand a frightful picture of the misery of the peasantry in the three years from 1738 to 1740. The population, which had been increasing, once more fell off; for the corvée devoured not only men's labour but their lives. 'At this very moment in which I write,' says D'Argenson, 'in time of peace (1739), with all appearance of an average if not an abundant crop, men are dying all round us, as thick as flies; they are wretched, eating grass[3].' The western provinces, the old Huguenot districts, are suffering most: society is so poor that it has no means wherewith to buy anything; food grows dearer, yet no one cultivates: the taxes are exacted rigorously, their amount increased. Look at Normandy, that fine country;—the farmers are ruined, and cease to exist; some squires even set their valets to till their farms. The Duke of Orleans one day threw a scrap of bread made of bracken[4] on the King's table in the Council room, saying—'See, sir, this is your subjects' food[5].' The people mobbed the King's carriage as he passed through the Faubourg S. Victor, crying 'Misery, famine, bread!' He had a moment of feeling for his people, and wished to do something for them: on reaching his house at Choisy, he dismissed all the gardeners, by way of retrenchment: they starved, with every one else. Again, in November 1740, D'Argenson writes that the number of those reduced to beggary will soon exceed that of those they beg from: the streets of Paris are unsafe after seven

[1] Martin, Histoire de France, xv. p. 215.

[2] The Marquis D'Argenson writes as a partisan, and possibly sketches only the darker scenes; yet in the main his picture must have been just: he was an honest man, a patriot and a philanthropist.

[3] Mémoires du Marquis D'Argenson (ed. 1825), p. 322.

[4] 'Fougère,' the bracken.

[5] D'Argenson, p. 325.

o'clock—'More Frenchmen have died,' he says, 'of misery in these two years, than were killed in all the wars of Louis XIV[1].' The King and Fleury seemed incapable of doing anything to solace so great a wretchedness: France was slowly perishing of famine.

[1] D'Argenson, p. 331.

CHAPTER III.

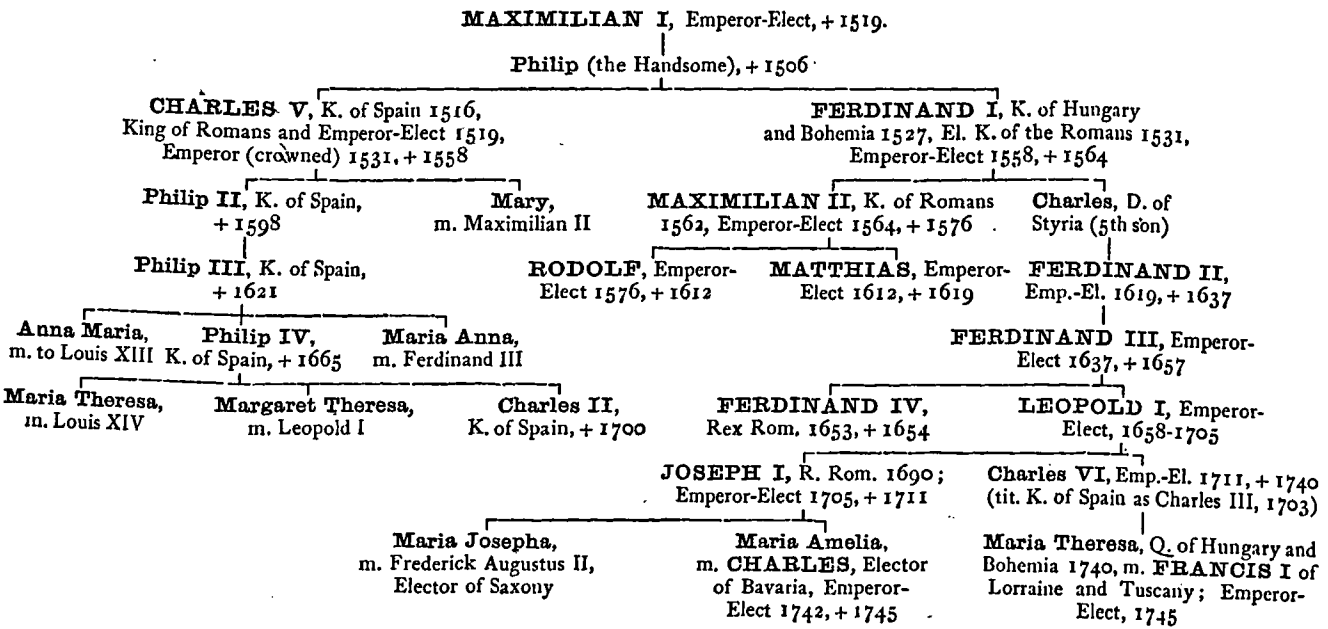
EUROPEAN COMPLICATIONS. A.D. 1740–1748.

THE year 1740 opens a new period of European affairs. The dim and feeble action of the time past gives place to greater affairs; higher interests and far-reaching differences, with men of a new stamp to take the lead, impress on this age a fresh mark of power and influence. France, though far from taking a first place in these affairs,—for her leading men were not strong enough,—plunged boldy, with large schemes of her own, into the arena. Fleury lived just long enough to see his peaceful schemes shattered against new ambitions, and to feel that the power was passing out of his hands into those of the Court-party led by the two Belle-Isles.

Two events, which took place in 1740, the death of Frederick William, King of Prussia, and that of the Emperor Charles VI, brought about these greater struggles and changes: the rivals who succeeded at Vienna and Berlin, Maria Theresa and Frederick, for nearly a quarter of a century will strive for the mastery, and will draw France into the contest now on this side and now on that.

With Charles VI the male line of the House of Austria ends: neither his elder brother Joseph nor he left sons behind them. His eldest daughter, the heroically obstinate Maria Theresa, wife of Francis, formerly Duke of Lorraine, now Grand Duke of Tuscany, was the person for whom the Emperor had tried so hard to get the guarantee of Europe, turning a deaf ear to Prince Eugene, who told him that the only sure guarantee

TABLE VII.—THE HOUSE OF AUSTRIA, DOWN TO 1740.


MAXIMILIAN I, Emperor-Elect, + 1519.
Philip (the Handsome), + 1506
CHARLES V, K. of Spain 1516, King of Romans and Emperor-Elect 1519, Emperor (crowned) 1531, + 1558
FERDINAND I, K. of Hungary and Bohemia 1527, El. K. of the Romans 1531, Emperor-Elect 1558, + 1564
Philip II, K. of Spain, + 1598
Mary, m. Maximilian II
MAXIMILIAN II, K. of Romans 1562, Emperor-Elect 1564, + 1576
Charles, D. of Styria (5th son)
Philip III, K. of Spain, + 1621
RODOLF, Emperor-Elect 1576, + 1612
MATTHIAS, Emperor-Elect 1612, + 1619
FERDINAND II, Emp.-El. 1619, + 1637
Anna Maria, m. to Louis XIII
Philip IV, K. of Spain, + 1665
Maria Anna, m. Ferdinand III
FERDINAND III, Emperor-Elect 1637, + 1657
Maria Theresa, m. Louis XIV
Margaret Theresa, m. Leopold I
Charles II, K. of Spain, + 1700
FERDINAND IV, Rex Rom. 1653, + 1654
LEOPOLD I, Emperor-Elect, 1658-1705
JOSEPH I, R. Rom. 1690; Emperor-Elect 1705, + 1711
Charles VI, Emp.-El. 1711, + 1740 (tit. K. of Spain as Charles III, 1703)
Maria Josepha, m. Frederick Augustus II, Elector of Saxony
Maria Amelia, m. CHARLES, Elector of Bavaria, Emperor-Elect 1742, + 1745
Maria Theresa, Q. of Hungary and Bohemia 1740, m. FRANCIS I of Lorraine and Tuscany; Emperor-Elect, 1745

was a stout army to defend his lands. This Charles would not listen to; for he was thoroughly imbued with a belief in strict legality, and died quite content, because by one sacrifice after another he had induced the powers to guarantee his Pragmatic Sanction.

His death proved at once the emptiness of all his hopes: there was a scramble, in which almost all Europe took part. Two objects of ambition were at once thrown before the world; the Imperial Crown, and the vast and scattered territories which paid allegiance to the House of Austria. This latter object was regarded in different ways; Maria Theresa held that it was all hers by the terms of the Pragmatic Sanction; three powers, Bavaria, Spain, Saxony, claimed also the whole inheritance on different grounds[1]; the King of Sardinia also aimed at getting his share of the Italian fiefs; lastly, the King of Prussia seized Silesia, claiming on technical grounds four Duchies in Lower Silesia, which certainly gave him no right to the whole province. Francis of Tuscany, Maria Theresa's spouse, and Charles Albert, Elector of Bavaria, were candidates for the Imperial Crown.

France and England, long under the guidance of two shrewd and peace-loving politicians, the octogenarian Fleury, and Walpole who was now sixty-four years old, had already begun to show signs of a desire for change. Walpole had lost much of his popularity by wishing, against the public voice, to keep peace with Spain in 1739; Fleury had seen a strong party growing up against him at Court, led by the two Belle-Isles, of whom the elder, a dexterous negotiator, had contributed much to the success of the transaction which eventually gave Lorraine

[1] (1) Bavaria claimed by 'a will of Ferdinand I, of which the original did not contain what it was said to do' (Heeren, Political System, p. 229, Engl. Trans.); (2) Spain claimed on genealogical grounds, by a compact between Charles V and Ferdinand, when Charles abdicated his German territories, and by a proviso of Philip III when he renounced the Austrian succession in 1617; (3) Saxony claimed by the rights of Maria Josepha, wife of the Elector Frederick Augustus II, elder daughter of Joseph I (who was elder brother to Charles VI). The last, on hereditary grounds, was important; the main object of the Pragmatic Sanction having been to set her aside.

to France. Now that matters had become critical in Europe, Belle-Isle burned to distinguish himself not only in diplomacy but in arms. He espoused with warmth the candidature of the Elector of Bavaria for the Imperial throne, and urged Louis XV to throw over the guarantees he had given, and by striking a vigorous blow to destroy all that remained of the power and name of Austria.

France had before her two lines of policy; Fleury's, to stand by, watching her own interests, reserving her strength, taking no part in a quarrel not her own; and Belle-Isle's, to enter at once on active warfare, and dictate her terms to Europe at the sword's point. There is no doubt which was the wiser of the two alternatives; unfortunately there could also be little doubt which the Court would adopt. The temper of Louis XV, averse to business at home, was inclined towards an interest in foreign affairs: he was brave, fond of excitement, wont to say, 'Nothing venture, nothing win,' and therefore likely to be tempted into the active line of policy, more especially as Cardinal Fleury's pacific influences were on the wane. The talk of those round the King who sketched a brilliant campaign, and pointed out how the friendship of the Elector of Bavaria opened the door to Austria and Bohemia, was certain to affect him much: in a word, the warlike policy was soon adopted.

On the other hand, what would England, the old ally of France, now do? The House of Hanover had not yet become really English: with the extraordinary want of proportion which seems always to characterise the inhabitants of small states, they thought the Electorate more important than the kingdoms: they allowed Charles VI to reckon implicitly on their help. The English nation, weary of Walpole's sagacious and peaceful rule, was quickly coming to think, on very different grounds, much as the King thought: he for Hanover, they for their commercial interests, were inclined to prefer the Austrian to the French alliance. Above all, England was now at war with Spain: the 'Jenkin's ear' incident had set the country in a ferment, and war had been declared in October 1739. All the better

feelings of the nation were enlisted on behalf of the Austrian Queen: her youth and beauty, the heroism of her bearing, her pride and obstinacy, all delighted the English, who had nothing to gain by her overthrow, and might reap much profit on the sea from a war with France.

Frederick II began the war: seeing so many claimants vaguely floating about, with his intense directness he at the same moment claimed and occupied Silesia. Silesia is the valley of the Oder, from its sources till it has flowed well down into the plain of North Germany; there it touches on Brandenburg and the Lower Lausitz, so connecting itself on its narrow western frontier with Germany. It is driven like a wedge into the heart of those Slavonic and Czech peoples, who have ever been the eastern neighbours of Germany, their risk and temptation: to the north-east lay the Poles; to the south-west Bohemia and Moravia; for a short distance at the extreme point of Silesia it touches on Hungary, the Jablunka mountains forming the border-line between them. For the Prussian monarchy this valley was, in Austrian hands, a constant menace, for it brought the South Germans within a stone's throw of Berlin: without Silesia Prussia would never be safe, and could never take the lead in Northern Germany. The occupation of that Province by the King of Prussia marks the point of time at which the North begins to assert her independence of the South; her predominance comes at a much later moment of history. In the battle of Molwitz (April 1741) Frederick tried his maiden sword and the temper of his father's well-disciplined army on the forces of the ancient House of Habsburg: the new triumphed over the old.

Hereon the league against Maria Theresa sprang quickly into being: in May 1741 Belle-Isle secured the conclusion of a Treaty at Nymphenburg between France, Spain, and Bavaria; it was a Partition-treaty by which the German princes were to divide the Austrian territories, while France, guided by a luminous hero, should have her natural heritage of influence and glory. The King of Prussia wished for nothing better:

he at once acceded to the league, as did also Poland and Sardinia. Though the Palatine princes went the same way, the Empire remained neutral, with the exception of Hanover, which, with Russia, alone supported Maria Theresa in her perilous struggle. The sea-powers offered friendly mediation. Sweden held Russia in check: a French army in Westphalia threatened Hanover and reduced it to neutrality; and thus the Austrian Queen was left to her own resources, to the force of her own determined character and the enthusiasm of her disconnected territories: England, her only remaining friend, seemed only useful for subsidies.

Belle-Isle, persuasive and pleasing, ceaselessly active and ambitious, fertile in schemes and resources, eager to seize the future, dim-sighted as to the meaning of the present, was the man lightly to adventure great things, and gaily to fail for want of solidity. At the head of thirty-four thousand men, he marched to the Rhine, crossed it, joined a strong force of Bavarians, and took Linz and Passau: their horse pushed down the Danube valley, and alarmed Vienna, which might have fallen into the hands of the allies but for Fleury's reluctance to make Bavaria too strong. The Austrian Court took refuge in Hungary, where the spirit and beauty of their young Queen aroused the warmest enthusiasm[1] of her gallant subjects: German Austria was saved by those Huns and Magyars whom she had long coerced. A great levy of Hungarians, Croats, Dalmatians, strange wild creatures with fear-inspiring names, huzzars, tolpatches, pandours; it seemed as if Western Europe were about to undergo a new invasion of Huns or Tartars from the East.

Charles Albert, Elector of Bavaria, had himself recognised the Archduke of Austria at Linz; then, thinking his work done in the Danube Valley, he left a strong force behind him, and marched into Bohemia. Before a relieving army could come

[1] This was the time of the world-famous (if apocryphal) scene of the 'Moriamur pro rege nostro Maria Theresa.'

up from Moravia, a French adventurer, Chevert, acting under the orders of Maurice of Saxony, surprised and took Prague by a night attack. The Elector on entering the town had himself crowned King of Bohemia; he then left the French with much weakened forces to defend the Bohemian capital, while he passed on to Frankfort, where he was elected Emperor in January 1742. Belle-Isle, who also went thither, was now at the topmost point of his glory: his schemes seemed crowned with complete success: his candidate was Emperor: the allies had menaced Vienna and had taken Prague.

At this very time the tide had turned. The Austrians with their wild levies from the east poured up the Danube valley, sacking and burning as they went. The forces left in Linz under Ségur, had to capitulate after a poor resistance, and the Imperialists entered Munich the very day on which the Elector was crowned Emperor at Frankfort. Belle-Isle was ill, and Marshal Broglie, the mere wreck of an old soldier[1], was sent to relieve him. The worst peril of Austria seemed past: the new Russian government, that of the Empress Elizabeth, now raised to the throne by a revolution, listened to the English envoys, and took the Austrian side, keeping Sweden in check. In England the irritation against Walpole had at last become too strong for that wary minister: his twenty years of prosperity and political corruption now came to an end: the new ministry were very hostile to France, and determined to carry on war with vigour: they even persuaded the Dutch to vote a subsidy for Maria Theresa. Thus crumbled to pieces the political edifice which Fleury had raised with so much pains and trouble: and the old minister must have seen with bitterness that his country, with insufficient arms and incapable officers, was engaged in a struggle which was arraying half Europe against her, and of which no one could foretell the end. Prussia, followed by the Elector of Saxony made terms with Austria in

[1] He was the first Duke, created in 1742. He had served with distinction under the generals of the later time of Louis XIV, but was now incapacitated for active campaigning, having had two apoplectic strokes.

June, 1742; for Maria Theresa, yielding to the advice of England, was willing to cede to Frederick all Silesia except Teschen, Troppau and Jägerndorf.

The result was very serious for the French in Bohemia. Broglie, in spite of Belle-Isle's remonstrances, had stretched his force along the line of the Moldau; the Austrians fell on them, maltreated them severely, took their baggage, and drove the Marshal back to Prague. There they beleaguered the French from June to the end of the year. The energy of Belle-Isle, the fierce sorties and defence of the city and the French camp, wore down both combatants: and it was believed that Maillebois' army from Westphalia would soon relieve the blockaded forces. Maillebois, however, had orders to risk nothing: and instead of breaking through the Austrians opposed to him, he passed aside into Bavaria, where, after driving out the Austrians, he went into winter quarters. Broglie left Belle-Isle to himself in Prague: and orders came from Paris that the city should be evacuated at once. In mid-winter, through the bitterest cold, Belle-Isle succeeded in evading his enemies, and brought back across the Rhine the pitiable remnant of the great army which had marched forth so proudly the year before. Of fifty-two thousand men, only about ten thousand got back[1]. The retreat was really made possible only by the soldierlike disposition of Maurice of Saxony who, by seizing Egra[2], kept the way open for the retreating army. Still, the feat was greatly over-praised: they were the ten thousand of Xenophon again;—though some cynics observed that there was this difference between Belle-Isle and Xenophon, that the Greek general had brought all his army home again, while the French Marshal left his behind[3]. Chevert, who commanded the garrison left behind in Prague, and chiefly composed of invalids, capitulated shortly afterwards on honourable terms.

[1] It is reckoned that of 120,000 men who crossed the Rhine in 1741, scarcely 35,000 recrossed that river in 1743, and these in great destitution and distress.

[2] It was at Egra in Bohemia that Wallenstein was assassinated.

[3] Sismondi, Histoire des Français, xxviii. p. 261.

The war thus waged by France against the aged minister's will had become disastrous: the materials were bad, the generals incapable and disunited, the soldiers little used to war. The Emperor, whose election, so short a time ago, had been a triumph, was now an incumbrance to them; his hereditary states were entirely overrun and wrested from him: he retired to Frankfort, where he satisfied himself, as best he might, with the vain show of his imperial dignity. That weathercock, the King of Sardinia, seeing which way the wind blew, also in 1742 had deserted the Franco-Bavarian side. These things embittered Fleury's last days: his policy, safe if obscure, had been cast aside, and France seemed to be descending a rapid slope. While matters were at their worst he sickened and died, having tenaciously held the reins of power to the end. He closed his weary eyes in January 1743, in his ninetieth year.

As Louis XV had regretted the Duke of Orleans, so now he mourned for his aged minister. He sincerely regretted one who took on him all the burden of state-cares, judged for him, saved him all trouble, did not interfere with his royal vices. The King was thirty-three years old; he had been on the throne twenty-seven years, yet no one so unfit to reign; indolent and cold, he hated business; timidly proud, a difficult and dangerous character, he shrank from any open action which would betray his ignorance, and that was great: above all, he was nonchalant and careless, utterly oblivious to the interests and welfare of the great country over which he professed to rule. Yet he declared that he would henceforth have no First Minister, echoing the great monarch's phrase, with a very different temper underneath. The consequence was that his government was subjected to a series of boudoir-conspiracies and female revolutions, worthy of the most degraded of oriental courts.

Early in 1743, King George of England, with the Duke of Cumberland, eager to come to blows with the French whom he hated, had joined the Anglo-German army[1] in Belgium, under command of Lord Stair, the old friend of Dubois. In Holland

[1] Sometimes called the 'Pragmatic Army.'

the Orange-party, the old war-party opposed to France, had prevailed, and the States-General agreed to furnish twenty thousand men; all Europe was turning against France. The Anglo-Germans, some fifty thousand strong, were to make an attempt to capture Charles VII at Frankfort on the Main, then to march southwards so as to cut off Broglie who was in Bavaria. Lord Stair accordingly pushed hastily and rashly[1] on up the right bank of the Main as far as Aschaffenburg, depôt and supplies being left at Hanau. There he was met by Noailles, who with a splendid artillery had taken up a good position in his way, with strong batteries holding both banks of the Main, while at the same moment he threatened the allied communications at Seligenstadt opposite Dettingen, half-way between Hanau and Aschaffenburg. The allies were now in imminent peril: a little patience and prudence on the part of the French would have secured their disastrous retreat, perhaps their surrender, King and army. All, however, was spoilt by the noble rashness of the Duke of Grammont, Noailles' nephew, who foolishly pushed forward with the French Guards, making the well-placed batteries useless, and turning an impregnable defensive position into a very bad attack. The result was the battle of Dettingen[2], and the total defeat of the French. The allies only used their victory to secure an unmolested retreat to their supports.

Nor could Noailles advance; Broglie, whose forward movements in Bavaria ought to have left him free to act, had fallen back to Strasburg: and Noailles, unsupported, also drew in towards Alsace: all Germany was now clear of French arms. Charles VII, despairing of his cause, made terms with Maria Theresa; who also, at Worms in the end of 1743, made alliance, through the influence of George II, with the King of Sardinia

[1] Frederick the Great, Œuvres ii. p. 22, 23 (ed. 1788), blames Stair's great imprudence.

[2] France, with characteristically cynical want of seriousness, made very merry over this mishap; it was the 'journée des bâtons rompus' (d'Harcourt and Grammont had meant to win the Marshal's bâton); the French guards were nicknamed 'les canards du Mein;' a sword was hung up against Noailles' house, with the inscription 'point homicide ne seras.'

and the Elector of Saxony. The proud Queen believed that she saw before her not merely the recovery of all she had lost, but even an opportunity of wresting Lorraine and Alsace from France.

With 1744 a new period of the war begins: France awakes from her torpor; her King, who had lately passed from cold indifference and callousness to excess of libertinism and vices fit only for the worst days of the regency, came under the influence of a mistress, the Duchess of Châteauroux, who was both brave and proud, and did her best to rouse him from his shameful indolence. The moment seemed promising: the league of Worms had awakened all the suspicions of Frederick of Prussia; he knew that Austria would recover Silesia if she could, and that the alliance was in fact directed against him: he therefore joined the poor Emperor Charles VII, the French, the Swedes, and the Elector Palatine in a new league of Frankfort (April 1744). Thus Europe was once more divided into two groups; at the head of the one stood France, of the other England: the Court of Versailles decided on the reduction of the Low Countries, as a first step: that might produce a change in Holland; while a fleet and sufficient army were told off to land Charles Edward, 'the young Pretender,' on the coast of Scotland.

This second part of the programme failed entirely for this year; a storm dispersed the fleet, and the landing never took place: on the Northern frontier more was accomplished. Two armies, one under Noailles, with the engineers and artillery for siege-work, the other under Marshal Saxe[1] to protect the first, marched into Flanders: the King and his vigorous mistress accompanied the besieging army. Town after town fell; their defences had been badly kept up, and the new departments of the French army were in full vigour; the Dutch began to tremble, for the French seemed to be securing a safe basis for an advance on Holland. Matters, however, on the other side were not so favourable for them; Charles of Lor-

[1] Made Marshal in 1743.

raine[1], commanding a fine army of Germans, had crossed the frontier of Alsace, and was pushing Coigny, in command there with an allied force, back into France. Thereon the King, with Noailles and the bulk of his army, marched eastwards: on his way he was taken very ill at Metz, and his life despaired of: a terrible struggle for power took place at his bedside, the Duke of Richelieu fighting hard to keep up the influence of the reigning favourite, the Duke of Chartres eager to overthrow her. The King was told he must die; under pressure of religious fears, and the threats of the Bishop of Soissons, he consented to banish the Duchess of Châteauroux, who had tended him with much loving care: she was obliged to retire, and the King made ready for an edifying death. His malady, however, took a favourable turn; and he recovered, to the intense joy of all France, which had watched his illness with the utmost interest and excitement. It is singular how popular this very feeble monarch had become; it had been so from the beginning: after his illness in 1721 there had been amazing rejoicings on his recovery, 'so highly beloved is this young Prince, from what motive I shall not pretend to examine,' as said an English on-looker at the time[2]. It is fair to add that the French people knew little of the private life of their King, and attributed to his quiet character much of the comparative rest and prosperity they had enjoyed during his reign. With his recovery his scruples vanished: his neglected Queen, who had been sent for from Paris, was sent back again with contempt; the ruling mistress triumphed, her enemies all fell from power and disappeared.

During this period Frederick of Prussia had invaded Bohemia, seized Prague, threatened Vienna: Charles of Lorraine thereon abandoned Alsace, and marched for Bohemia: the French did nothing to harass or hinder him: Frederick, thanks to French inaction and incapacity, was obliged to fall back into Saxony.

[1] He was the brother-in-law of Maria Theresa.
[2] Ayerst, in Wake MSS., 6 August, 1721.

In the south the Franco-Spanish army and fleet, supporting Don Carlos who was hard pressed by the Austrians, won some considerable successes. Don Carlos defeated the invaders at Velletri, and drove them back to Bologna, while the Spaniards occupied Savoy and passed the Var: the fleets from Toulon fought an indecisive battle with the English fleet of observation, and got out to sea. The Franco-Spanish army took Nice and Villafranca, crossed the Alps, invested Coni, and defeated the King of Sardinia who came up to its relief. The winter however was coming on, and they were obliged to raise the siege and retire across the Alps.

In 1745 matters went better for the French: they followed their original plan of reducing the Netherlands, in spite of Frederick's remonstrances, and Louis XV joined Marshal Saxe at the siege of Tournay. The Duke of Cumberland, with sixty thousand men, marched to its relief: then Marshal Saxe with about an equal number, established himself in a fine position across their path at Fontenoy, where, on the 10th of May, 1745, a great battle was fought. The allies, attacking the position, penetrated in a dense column, by a stubborn forward movement, to the very heart of the French army. Had there been a capable general to support the attack, their victory would have been speedily secured; instead, at the critical moment the column came to a stand, not knowing what next to do: the point-blank discharge of three guns, and the vigorous attack of the King's Guards, under the eye of Louis himself, who showed plenty of spirit and bravery, decided the day against the allies: the column was torn in pieces; it broke up, and fled[1]. The results were great, Tournay, the prize for which the battle had been fought, fell at once; Ghent and Bruges, Oudenarde, Ostend, Dendermonde, all yielded: the allies could nowhere make head.

In Italy also the French arms were victorious: the battle of

[1] If any one cares to see how history should not be written, let him study Voltaire's account of the Battle of Fontenoy, which D'Argenson (Mémoires, p. 446) called 'un morceau digne de l'antiquité.'

Bassignano had laid all Lombardy at their feet. Still, the heart of the war was neither in Flanders nor in Italy, and Frederick said with good reason that a battle won on the Scamander would have been every whit as useful to him: his great foe was gradually developing all her strength; she had obtained the Imperial crown for her husband Francis, Grand Duke of Tuscany (Sept. 1745). Frederick with one hand offered peace, while with the other he won great victories against Austrians and Saxons: at last Maria Theresa, at the urgent request of England, made peace at Dresden with the terrible young King: he recognised Francis I as Emperor, she ceded Silesia (3 Jan. 1746). The lesser powers of Germany at once came in to this treaty, and France was almost entirely isolated.

The vigorous policy of England was now beginning to bear fruit. Her navies grew in strength and size: the independent attempt of Charles Edward (July 1745 to April 1746), which revealed a strange period of torpor in the English mind, during which he was neither holpen nor holden by popular adhesion or resistance, was brought to an end at Culloden by the Duke of Cumberland: the only warm partisans of the young Pretender, the wild Highlanders, were repressed with terrible severity; and the chance of a powerful and very embarrassing division, which the French neglected to seize, passed by for ever. England now began to grasp with no unsteady hand the command of the seas; she covered the home-waters with innumerable ships of war and privateers; she attacked the Spanish colonies, seized Cape Breton, captured French convoys, cut off the connexions of French or Spanish colonies, defeated a French fleet off Cape Finisterre, and took the merchantmen it convoyed with untold spoil.

The French settlements in India, where Pondicherry had become a very flourishing place, were beginning to spread out all over that great Peninsula: two men of ability, Labourdonnais and Dupleix, who, if they could have worked together, might have founded a solid empire there, were unfortunately rivals. When war broke out between France and England,

Labourdonnais equipped a little fleet, defeated the English ships off the coast, and besieged Madras: Dupleix, arriving after he had agreed to a capitulation by which Madras was to ransom itself, refused to accept the terms, arrested Labourdonnais, and took and burnt Madras. The fallen general was sent to France, and ended his days—poor recompense for his gallantry and great services—in the Bastille. The English recovered Madras, and drove Dupleix back to Pondicherry, which they failed to take.

In the autumn of 1746 Marshal Saxe followed up the successes of the past year, and took all the important towns of Belgium; he defeated Charles of Lorraine at Rocoux, and seemed to restore France to something of her ancient glory; this foreign general seemed her only stay. In Italy the year 1746 had been unfortunate for the French: their army under Maillebois, reduced to a shadow of itself, was obliged to recross the Var, and the Austrians even pillaged Provence. Belle-Isle, who showed no lack of vigour at this moment, drove them back into Italy, and helped to raise the siege of Genoa, which was hotly pressed on by English fleet and Austrian army.

In 1747 the Chevalier Belle-Isle, the Marshal's brother, was killed in an attempt to drive the Austrians out of the Apennines; this was the last action fought by the French in Italy under the old régime. They now abandoned all attempts on the Peninsula.

In the Netherlands the war went on, Holland holding firmly to the English alliance: Marshal Saxe in vain attempted the reduction of Maestricht, which was strong, and was also covered by the Duke of Cumberland. Although Saxe defeated the allies at Lawfeld, he could not compel them to retreat, or succeed in completing the investment of Maestricht: he abandoned the struggle, and turning his arms against a less important stronghold, Bergen-op-Zoom, took it after a long and brilliant siege. This ended the campaign of 1747.

Early next year, Marshal Saxe, after some masterly movements, sat down before Maestricht. The allies, weary at last of war, began seriously to think of peace, and a Congress

was opened in April 1748 at Aix la Chapelle. Negociations went on through the summer: the actual peace was not signed till October, though the preliminaries had been agreed to in April. It excited no small surprise that Louis XV, who was pleased to declare that he would 'make peace as a King, not as a tradesman,' should have obtained so little from the triumphs and sacrifices of the war: in vain had Marshal Saxe secured Belgium, and Belle-Isle Savoy and Nice: the only thing the King seemed to be anxious for was leisure and money, that he might waste both on his infamous pleasures.

So Lord Sandwich and Kaunitz, the great Austrian statesman who here began his diplomatic career, had an easy task: the two chief belligerents, France and England, mutually restored their conquests, France receiving back Cape Breton, England Madras; the frontier-fortresses, for the most part dismantled, were restored to Holland. Don Philip was secured at Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla; to Sardinia came portions of the Milanese; Dunkirk retained its fortifications on the land side only, and was not again to be a refuge for French privateers. Silesia was secured, with Glatz, to Frederick II; on the other side the powers solemnly recognised the Emperor Francis I, and again guaranteed the old Pragmatic Sanction. Lastly, France agreed to eject Charles Edward from her borders, and to guarantee the Hanoverian Succession. Nothing was said about the contested boundaries of Canada and Nova Scotia.

The Peace, which seemed to settle the affairs of Europe, was little more than a magnificent truce. The boundaries-question in America might any day reopen disputes between England and France: the steady and dogged determination of Maria Theresa to recover Silesia would one day lead to fresh complications and war in Germany. The great French scheme for the dismemberment of Austria thus failed; she had lost Silesia, Parma, and Piacenza; yet her solid strength was untouched, and she was still one of the great powers. The gravest result of the Peace was that England, though burdened with heavy debt, had risen to a first place in the councils of Europe;

the next result to be noticed was the fact that, the centre of the political balance being thus shifted, new combinations must certainly follow. In the next war not England and Austria, but England and Prussia, will be friends; while France and Austria, now deadly foes, will reverse the policy of ages by becoming close allies.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AGE OF MADAME DE POMPADOUR.

A.D. 1748–1763.

THERE have doubtless been many worse women than Madame d'Étioles; none, probably, have ever been so mischievous. After the death of Madame de Châteauroux in 1744, in the scramble for the vacant place, in which every beautiful woman in France seemed to court dishonour, the young and brilliant wife of a small official, daughter of an army-contractor, caught the attention of the King in the hunting-field, and won the prize of her ambition. Society was vexed and offended,—not merely her rivals, but the Court generally,—at her rise to favour; for she was not even of the lesser noblesse, and her obscure birth seemed to be a far more heinous fault than her adultery. She was, however, not only splendidly beautiful and vivacious; she was a woman of considerable taste, great power of management, decided cleverness; and, for all her evil life and the misery she brought on hundreds of decent families, she had a kindly heart, and gave lavishly—of what was not her own[1]. In her those marked characteristics of the age, the union of personal vice and depravity with strong feelings of humanity, and the love of a high-soaring philosophy, which was contemptuous of ancient creeds and opinions, were very clearly to be seen: she deserves her place among the 'enlightened despots,' the 'philosophic princes' of the eighteenth century.

[1] 'She made a splendid, even a beneficent use of her wealth; she portioned poor girls, assisted old men, repaired ruined villages, followed the impulse of the new philosophy.' Lacretelle, Histoire de France, III. lib. x. p. 153.

'The period we have now reached may be fairly regarded as a regency exercised by Madame de Pompadour[1],' for that was the title by which Madame d'Étioles was ennobled and becomes famous in European history. She ruled for twenty years; under her baleful influences, what little vigour the monarch had shown under the guidance of Madame de Châteauroux died utterly away: the King became a mere cypher in the state; men would have forgotten his existence, but for some horrible scandal which now and then, like poisonous bubbles rising on a still and noisome pool, betrayed the foul life beneath. In silence, but none the less surely, corruption and deadly vices were working out the ruin of France.

The difficulty which besets us in these closing pages of the record of the old Monarchy of France is inevitable, though vexatious. We may not seek the living among the dead; we must deal not with the germs of coming life, the changed interests, the newly awakened national powers, but with the gradual progress of that corruption which beset all institutions alike, and brought France down to her lowest point of degradation. We must watch the consuming of the old Phoenix; we may take no note of the young and splendid bird as it rises out of the ashes of the past. We can deal with the 'new ideas' only so far as they tend to subvert the 'official beliefs,' social, political, theological: the constructive work of the philosophers, the philanthropists, the economists, must be set aside for the present. These things must form the vestibule to every attempt to construct a history of the rise, the fortunes, and the fall of modern Imperialism. For the part of the work on which we are now engaged we may use the brilliant pages of M. Taine[2]; for that of the future we do well to reserve the strong and scientific treatise of De Tocqueville[3].

[1] Lacretelle, Histoire de France, III. lib. x. p. 152.

[2] Taine, Origines de la France Contemporaine, tome i.

[3] 'Ce que la Revolution a été moins que toute autre chose, c'est un événement fortuit,' De Tocqueville, L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution, p. 55 (ed. 1856). These words may be taken as the *motive* of the whole of the work; it traces with scientific accuracy the causes which led, by inevitable sequence, up to the great explosion.

The peculiarity of the time lies in this, that there is not only a superstructure of society which is beginning to crumble into ruin, and grows weaker and worse and more dangerous to itself year by year; not only a substructure of the oppressed throughout France, who become yearly more conscious of the evils they suffer and more restless under them; but that there is also a third power, independent of both and above both, though in the outset it may not fully understand its proper functions or always make wise utterances, or even duly translate its own precepts into action. This power, call it mind, reason, public opinion, enlightenment, as we may, which spreads at this time across Europe, which seizes greedily on all knowledge, which is eager to push on physical studies, or to enquire into economic principles, or to strike out the aphorisms of political life, or to speculate on the recondite questions of philosophy and psychology;—this power, as yet little understood in the modern world, is destined, in a way, to be to the eighteenth century what the revelations of the Reformation were to the sixteenth. The Crown and Court understand little or nothing of it; the career of Philip of Orleans shews clearly how a ruler blest with all the necessary ability and tastes, could fall hopelessly back into the slough of moral turpitude out of which neither high moral theory, nor the contemplative life, for all its boasted charms, could extricate him. And it must be remembered that the preachers of these new and exalted doctrines were often men of miserable moral conduct; that the most beautiful precepts came from the pens of those who trampled into the dirt all that was holiest in the moral and social relations of their own lives.

This it is that makes the delineation of the age so painful: it would be bad enough to have to chronicle the heartless libertinism of the polite world, and the starving even to death of the people; the mock simplicity of the idyllic writers, and the hollow falseness of the moralists, fill us with despair.

One of the most definite of the principles practised by Louis XIV was the rule that no great gentleman should be

permitted to live quietly on his estates. He was the parent of a general absenteeism in France, which worked very badly for the country, and was one of the distinct causes of the Revolution of 1789. He centralised all government and all society; in return France looked helplessly up to Paris, and did whatever the capital decreed. It is wonderful how much care Louis XIV took to get his noblesse away from the country: all favour, all offices of honour, all hopes of advancement for a man's family, depended on a sedulous attendance at Court. If the name of any one who lived on his estates was mentioned for preferment, there was always the same answer; 'I do not know him: I have never seen him here;' and he was passed over. The Intendants of provinces were instructed to urge the country-gentlemen to go to town; they were to make it uncomfortable for them if they did not. Consequently, all who cared for society or preferment rushed up to Paris, and swelled the crowd of hangers-on who thronged the salons at Versailles. Several results followed: first, the country was condemned as hopelessly dull and vulgar; to be provincial was fatal; it became one of the worst punishments to be ordered to retire to one's estates; those whom this fate befell filled the air with their despairing cries; Ovid in the Tristia was not more hopeless, as he compared his cold Thracian exile with the sunshine of society at Rome. Next, the cultivation of the estates of the nobles grew rapidly worse and less productive[1]: in many cases the land fell entirely out of tillage, and as the returns from it diminished, the lord's cost of living was enormously increased: nothing so much impoverished the country, or tended so much to ruin the noblesse, as this constant non-residence[2]. We are told that about the middle of the eighteenth century all the old

[1] In 1756 the Count of Mirabeau says, 'Il n'y a pas une seule terre un peu considérable dont le propriétaire ne soit à Paris, et consequemment ne néglige ses maisons et ses châteaux.' Traité de la Population, p. 108

[2] The lands of religious houses, in which the owners were ever resident, were in marked contrast; they were the best-tilled in France.

families, except two or three hundred, were ruined; often the greater the nominal income the greater the debts. Then, as a consequence of this extravagance, neglect, and poverty, estates frequently changed hands; not only did rich officials, and sometimes prosperous citizens buy up titled lands[1], but even the peasants themselves, hoarding up their life-long savings, with steady purpose and infinite anxieties, purchased the little plots of land on which their humble cabins stood, and which they had tilled from youth. In this way it was reckoned that one quarter of all the land had become the property of the peasantry: it is now well known that the great subdivision of the land in France dates from the half century before the Revolution[2], not from that time only. A third result of the centralisation was that manners rapidly and ominously grew worse: an idle crowd, with neither learning to interest them nor work to occupy them, had nothing to do but to plunge into dissipations of every kind. The state of the Court under Louis XIV was bad, if decorous: under Louis XV it cried to heaven. The elegant exterior covered a ruin underneath; manners took the place of morals. The nobles were utterly uneducated; they were bad citizens, bad soldiers, bad husbands: if their manners were better than those of Molière's 'Bourgeois Gentilhomme, their ignorance was at least as great: from childhood upwards they led a false and useless life; pride, privilege, and freedom from moral duties and from civic taxation, were their glory. Vice did not pay 'her last tribute' of hypocrisy to virtue: she stalked unblushing through the town. No one, however, might laugh or criticise or venture on witticisms; for such the ready answer was a 'lettre de cachet,' and a lifetime in the Bastille.

The upper clergy, usually noble also, 'baked of the same

[1] We have seen that Law purchased no fewer than fourteen titled estates.

[2] Arthur Young, whose travels took place just before and at the exact time of the outbreak of the Revolution, notices this great subdivision of the land.

dough,' were equally non-resident, neglectful of their duties, sycophants to corrupt power, sunk in utter ignorance. Some of them were atheistic and immoral, others devotees and narrowly religious: we find them sometimes combining both characteristics, like the ladies of Bourges in 1754, who were 'bigoted and pretentious, much addicted to gambling and gallantry.' The parish priests, a very different tribe, who had only the one quality of ignorance in common with the dignified clergy, cherished no love for their more fortunate brethren, and went against them, when the time came.

Here then was nothing to purify, to ennoble, or to support the throne; nothing to build it up on a permanent basis, or to strengthen it when in danger. Louis XIV had created a centralised despotism, a form of government which cannot stand unless the despot be strong. Nor if we look at the other super-incumbent classes of society, do we find much hope. The great army of state-officials, most of whom had bought their places, farmed them selfishly and callously: Law, twenty years or more before this time, expresses to D'Argenson his amazement at finding that the noblesse are as nothing in the government of provinces: 'this realm of France,' he says, 'is governed by thirty Intendants. You have neither Parliament, nor Estates, nor governors: only these thirty "maîtres de requêtes" as agents in the provinces[1].' In other words, the old local authority was dead, the central government alone subsisting: little remained, save the right of administering justice in many parts, and the power to impose certain onerous feudal burdens; even these were become much smaller than of old, while the exactions of the central authority increased yearly. In most instances the peasant who had escaped out of the hands of his lord by purchase of his land, found that he had only fallen into the hands of the Paris government, and that his burdens seemed as heavy as ever, without the poor consolation he might have derived from the

[1] D'Argenson, Mémoires, p. 180.

nearness of his lord, and a feeling that he knew what became of his hardly-won earnings.

Thus then, neither noble nor priest nor taxgatherer seemed likely to be able to do much to sustain the tottering state: still less could men look to the King himself for help. Louis XV had now begun his later period, his time of unbridled self-indulgence. He had long lived only to amuse himself: as the Austrian ambassador once remarked of him, he could not find 'one hour a day for serious business.' Each day came some new party of pleasure; hunting, to him and to Louis XVI, was the business of life: the chase abroad and the salon at home,—this is the day of these weak kings. The world is full of examples of absolute monarchs who prefer to be 'rois fainéants,' do-nothing kings; and we may be disposed to think the log less evil than the stork. Yet if the balance be fairly stricken, the indifferent lazy oppressor has only one point in which we may be inclined to prefer him; he has not the vigour or ability to defend himself successfully, when the suffering world beneath is stirred up to resist him, and when the monstrous and unnatural edifice of which he is the crown and summit begins to totter to its fall.

At the time we are describing, Louis XV, ever cold and reserved, shrank more and more from contact with his people: they had neither interests nor duties in common. No magistrate or burgher could get audience: Louis XIV had been hard of access, his successor was inaccessible. So far did he carry this morbid hatred of the nation entrusted to his charge that he actually had a road built from Versailles to S. Denis, skirting Paris, so that when he went to Compiègne he should not be obliged to pass through his capital and see the glowering faces of his subjects[1]. The 'beneficent despot' of the eighteenth century was unknown at Paris, though the King's old father-in-law Stanislaus could have taught him all the humanity of the day. Louis XV, however, was in no mood to listen to the lessons of that charming old man, the 'Bene-

[1] This road was named 'le chemin de la révolte.'

ficent Philosopher[1],' as he loved to style himself; and certainly the Court at Versailles had no literary or humane ambitions which should make it wish to rival the charming little group of philanthropists and authors who surrounded Stanislaus and lived with him in a happy comity of letters at Lunéville and Nanci.

And if the King is useless and worse, the court around him will be no better. At Versailles there is no one to raise the State to higher things; if the King will not act, his Mistress will; Madame de Pompadour rules France during these years: The one precept for a courtier in these days was, 'Be civil to every one; ask for every vacant post; sit down whenever you can;' the tribe whose moral and social code is summed up in this sentence is perhaps not yet extinct, we discern one of them now and then, and smile at the resemblance. Then, in the days of this dim waste, splendour, and frivolity, these were the men who succeeded to all places of trust, in whose hands lay the destiny of the French nation[2]. How different was the career of Prussia at this same time; there a noblesse to the full as proud, and one which had retained far more of its power, was being transformed into a 'great regiment of useful functionaries.' All Prussia was administered as if it were an army in the highest efficiency and vigour, at the very moment when France was perishing under the weight of a Byzantine court.[3] As to the condition of the army of France, with its officers all noble and its privates all

[1] His works, under the title 'Œuvres du Philosophe bien faisant' were published at Nanci in 1765.

[2] 'Ce n'est point impunément qu'on transforme une noblesse d'utilité en une noblesse d'ornament.' Taine, L'Ancien Régime, II. i. 4, p. 134; to which place we may refer the reader for a picture of the impotence for good of the courtly noblesse.

[3] It was about this time that the King of Prussia was seated one day by the side of the French Ambassador at the Play, when by some hitch in the machinery the curtain stuck partly drawn up, and the legs of the actors appeared beneath. Frederick turned to the Ambassador: 'That is a picture of your master's council at Versailles,—legs and nothing else.' And the Minister was equal to the moment, for he replied, 'Perhaps, Sire; yet your Majesty knows by experience that legs are worth something,' alluding to the well-known flight of the King. Mallet du Pan, ii. 469.

peasants, it may be enough to say now that the noble officers were as inefficient and as corrupt in the army as elsewhere, while the private soldier was to the full as wretched as the peasant in his hut.

And if this was the state of the burdening classes, what was the condition of the burdened, of the millions groaning under these gilded thousands, of the bone and sinew of France? The older influence of the Third Estate was entirely gone. The Parliament of Paris might indeed retain some traditions of its old conservative and stubborn spirit, conservative against the unheard-of encroachments of the royal power. It was, however, impotent; its friends and allies among the Jansenist clergy and the burgher-classes, who had become strong and active after the freedom granted them by the Regency, had sunk down again into stupor: when they wake again, the absolutism they had resisted will have become the established order of things, and they will then sedulously defend against the new movements of the world the institution which fifty years ago they had opposed; so doing they will be swept away.

The burgher-class[1] had changed its ground. It had grown wealthier while all the rest became poorer: the financial excitement of Law's day had roused in the citizen the desire to speculate, to make a fortune; he jostled the needy nobleman, who had not a tenth of his money to venture. His losses were doubtless great when the crash came: yet the operations of that time had taught him much and had opened wide the horizon of his ideas. This, true to some degree in other towns, is emphatically true of the Parisian citizen: year by year he advances, his trade grows; the exports of France were nearly doubled in the period between 1720 and 1748: and nearly doubled themselves again between 1748 and 1788: towards the end of the century the progress of commerce was more rapid in France than in England[2].

[1] I here make much use of M. Taine's work. Liv. IV. c. iii. § 11, pp. 401, sqq.

[2] So says Arthur Young, i. p. 521 (ed. 1794).

From this class of society naturally came the financiers and lenders, who ministered to the wants of the Court, and filled up the yawning gulf in its accounts. The creditor of the State gets a new interest in, and a fresh power of interference over, public affairs, which become no longer 'les affaires du Roi,' 'the King's business,' into which no citizen should look; they are now, on the contrary, the affairs of King and creditor; an uncomfortable joint-business, which must in the end lead to unpleasant complications. It does not add to the good man's respect for his Sovereign when he not only lends him money, but finds himself defrauded of his interest. From this class, in large part, come the great writers, whose pens are already busy undermining the monarchy: during all this period ideas spread rapidly among the burghers; they greedily accept theories, which, as they see, are not only new but fashionable: to be atheist, or at most vaguely deist, to be humanitarian, to think that all men are equal;—these are the new ambitions of the solid citizen of France. The soil is well-prepared for the seed which Rousseau, the great prophet of the middle class, is already preparing to sow[1].

While the citizens, basing themselves on commerce and manufactures, were thus advancing rapidly, agriculture and the peasantry were either stationary or even falling back. The drawbacks on tillage were frightful: Rousseau's idyllic pictures had not the slightest resemblance to the truth; you might search from Lille to Marseilles, and never find one single subject for a romantic sentiment. You would find, instead, a starved and brutalised peasantry, living from hand to mouth; ill-fed, wretchedly clad, with wooden tools, the lineal descendants of those of Virgil. Noailles did not hesitate to say in 1745 that 'the situation of the kingdom was more deplorable than it had been in 1704.' If there was less of serfage in France than elsewhere there was far more of misery: the peasant-

[1] 'Dans les classes mitoyennes et inférieurs Rousseau a eu cent fois plus de lecteurs que Voltaire C'est lui seul qui a inoculé chez les Français la doctrine du peuple.' Mallet du Pan, Mercure Britannique, ii. p. 360.

proprietor had lost rather than gained by his freedom. He had evergrowing taxes to pay; roughly speaking, a third went to the King, a third to the Church, on the remaining third he had to subsist: we may judge what befell him when the seasons were bad: and all agriculture was so bad, that in the middle of last century a season which would now occasion no remark was fatal, bringing men to the verge of famine. No capital was laid out on the land: the noble had none: the great Churchman, if he had any, did not care to use it in that fashion; the peasant owner had none. Small farms or large, all were alike starved for want of enlightened outlay: the only check to the diminution of population was the necessity, under the system of infinitely subdivided farms, of hands to till the ground: the farmer who had a son or two to help him being better off than if he had to work alone.

The national result of this want of capital was an ever-recurring inability to cultivate the soil: for directly a short harvest came, all the seed-corn was eaten up, and there was neither store nor money to buy more: it is the yearly anxiety of the Intendants, to see whether the production will suffice to nourish the Province till the next harvest comes. No reserves of any kind existed. The introduction of the potato, towards the end of this period, was like new life to many districts; it seemed to France, as to Ireland, a God-send and blessing, and not, as it really was, a dangerously facile gift: food of a low class, grown with little trouble, is no true boon to a starving population.

If the peasant was miserable and backward, he was still able to understand something of his grievances: above all he was vexed and irritated by the absurd and oppressive game-laws which hindered him at every turn. The more reckless men became poachers; the woods and wild lands, which steadily grew in extent, as field after field fell out of cultivation, and was covered with scrub and thorns, harboured a whole population of outlaws: thither came the discontented, the starving, the criminal; there the weakened central authority seemed power-

less to touch them; they paid no taxes, cared nothing for the curé and his tithes, took their revenge on the game-laws, laughed at the impotence of government. Even close to Paris these wild bands were a terror to the wealthy: brigandage became organised; in 1754 one Mandrin at the head of sixty men defied society, and was with difficulty put down at last; the peasants honoured him as a kind of modern Robin Hood. Nor was his by any means a solitary case; the nomad population increased daily; wherever there was a wild country, there the lawless thronged: the borders of Brittany were full of them; the less bold and adventurous swelled the endless train of beggars and listless vagabonds. They rendered property unsafe; at the first note of the new doctrines they instinctively seized on what was congenial to themselves; they not merely plundered because they starved, but because their teachers preached a new distribution of wealth.

Thus stood the elements of society; on the one side elevated to a politeness and height of artificial good manners, which veneered arrogance and corruption, on the other side descending to the savage state, to all animal crimes and brutality.

It only remains for us to deal very briefly with the way in which the opinions of the day were promulgated, and their influence in still farther undermining the structure of the State.

For, as we have said, literature had become an independent power, the influences of which began a fresh life in the eighteenth century; for public opinion now exerted a new and almost incalculable force, acting on society as it had never done before. That broad-spread classes should have judgments of their own; that they should count for anything in the government and direction of affairs, was a thing little understood. Neither did the ruling powers see how to meet this growing difficulty, nor the people understand in what way they should limit and give practical form to their newly-found strength. Consequently there was no harmony between them: in France at least, it soon came to open war between established institutions

and literature; and as the institutions were all worm-eaten and worn out, they could not stand the new pressure put on them; they broke and fell to the ground. It is not that these writers of the eighteenth century made the evil: we are too apt to think of Voltaire as a great destroyer. The fact is that the evil existed before in very acute and extreme forms; the influence of literature was a consequence not a cause of the giving way of ancient faiths and received opinions and effete institutions.

For a time literature in France had been almost dumb, at the time when it was making a great and fruitful advance in England: as we go on we shall see that the great French writers of the eighteenth century drew a large part of their inspirations from English sources: that Voltaire's sojourn in this country gave him his philosophy, that Montesquieu's admiration for the English Constitution formed the key of his political writings, that Rousseau drank in the sweet draught of his philanthropy from the English humanitarians of the century.

The first note of the new literature was struck by the beneficent 'Abbé of Saint Pierre' as he is called[1], the man who invented, as a keynote to the aspirations of his own spirit and of the age, the word 'bienfaisance,' and, rare excellence, acted up to the word he had introduced. He lived for peace and justice, no doubt an utopist and a theorist: a little in advance of his age, he found no acceptance among rulers, though they respected his sincerity.

Then came the economists, the 'Physiocrats,' who, led by Quesnay, enquired into the material condition of France, and the hope of bettering her miseries. As their name indicates, they proposed to allow Nature to rule; society should be reformed by enquiry into the laws of Nature, and by giving those laws expression in active life. Quesnay had been brought up in the country: he had seen the wretched state of agriculture, and longed to restore it to its proper place of honour

[1] Charles Castel de Saint Pierre; to be kept quite clear of Bernardin de Saint Pierre, who was six years old when his namesake died in 1743.

in the state. Castel de Saint Pierre sought to reform the political world; Quesnay the social life.

The series of great writers of the age may be said to begin with Montesquieu[1], though Voltaire had published his *Œdipus* in 1718, and the *Lettres Persanes* did not appear till 1721. Montesquieu, a man of noble birth, was brought up as a lawyer. We trace in him accordingly an aristocratic and legal tone of mind, which naturally took pleasure in England and the law-abiding conservatism of her constitution, as it appeared to him in the middle of the eighteenth century. Like so many of his fellows, Montesquieu chafed under the influence of a corrupt clergy, and declared against them, with the philosophers. This was almost the only point he had in common with Voltaire, whom he heartily disliked. We may say that he represents the aristocratic and constitutional resistance to the state of things in France, while Voltaire is champion of liberty of thought and tolerance. Montesquieu resists the Jesuit-influences of his day on conservative grounds alone: Voltaire resists them by resting on the enlightened despotism of his time, and appealing to it, rather than to the laws or constitution of his country. Lastly, at a later day, Rousseau, sworn foe to society, from which he had suffered much, the sentimentalist, enemy of aristocracy and monarchy, instinctively antagonistic to the legal temperament, speaks directly to the people, even as Montesquieu had spoken to the educated and the well-to-do, and Voltaire to kings; and they, stirred to the heart by his appeals, elected him the prophet of their cause, believed in him, and at his bidding subverted the whole fabric of society.

Montesquieu's great work, the 'Esprit des Lois,' which followed his 'Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness and Fall of the Romans' (1734), and appeared in 1748, forms an epoch in French prose style. He and Voltaire are the two parents of modern French prose literature. The 'Esprit des Lois' was far more greedily read in England than in France. Society

[1] Charles de Secondat, Baron of Montesquieu, was born near Bordeaux in 1689, and died at Paris in 1755.

there had little taste for so solid a work; they vastly preferred the lively sparkle of the Persian Letters: the book was perhaps too clearly influenced by an admiration for the constitution of England, and by a love for liberty, face to face with the weak and arbitrary despotism which was dragging France to a catastrophe.

If Montesquieu is the advocate of political freedom, Voltaire is the champion of tolerance and freedom of conscience: and that, in his day, and with his surroundings, meant that he was the deadly foe of the established faith, as he saw it in its acts in France. When we regard this apostle of toleration, and watch his pettinesses and vanity, note him at kings' courts, see him glorifying Louis XIV, that great antagonist of all tolerance, whether religious or political or social, we are inclined to think that the most difficult of all toleration is that of having to endure its champion and to try to do him justice.

Voltaire[1] was no deep thinker: he had an amazing cleverness, was very susceptible of the influence of thought, and unrivalled in expression. We shall expect to find him taking colour from what was round him, nor shall we be astonished if that colour is dazzling and brilliant. Five successive influences marked his earlier life. First, his education under the Jesuits, which gave him an insight into their system; secondly, his introduction to the irreligious and immoral society of the fashionable Abbés of the day, which shewed him another side of the official religion of the time; thirdly, the beneficent friendship of the Abbé de Caumartin, who set him thinking about great and ambitious subjects, and led him to write the Henriade, and probably also to begin

[1] François Marie Arouet was son of a notary; his mother was noble. Hear with what lofty scorn the great aristocrat Saint-Simon alludes to him: 'Je ne dirois pas ici qu'Arouet fut mis à la Bastille pour avoir fait des vers trés-effrontés, sans le nom que ses poésies, ses aventures, et la fantaisie du monde lui ont fait. Il étoit fils du notaire de mon père, que j'ai vu bien de fois lui apporter des actes à signer. Il n'avoit jamais pu rien faire de ce fils libertin.' Saint-Simon, Mémoires, ix. p. 221. Voltaire was born in 1694; his first publication, these satirical lines reflecting on Louis XIV, came out soon after that monarch's death: it was for these that he went to the Bastille. On being released he took his new name of Voltaire, an anagram of the words Arouet l(e)j(eune)—Arouet junior.

projecting his 'Siècle de Louis XIV'; fourthly, the enforced leisure of the Bastille, whither he went a second time in 1726 for having resented an insult put on him by a coarse nobleman, one of the Rohans; lastly,—thanks to the order for his exile,—his sojourn in England after release from the Bastille, and his friendship for the chief writers and thinkers of this country. Hitherto he had been a purely literary man, henceforth he was fired with an ambition to be a philosopher and a liberator. Certainly, France was unfortunate in the education she gave this brilliant and wayward child of her genius.

There was hardly a Frenchman of eminence in this period who did not either visit England or learn the English language, many doing both. And one so bright and receptive as Voltaire could not fail to notice many things. He could see how free thought was: he could make a contrast between the respect paid to letters in London, and their degradation under Louis XIV and later: he saw Newton and Locke in places of honour, Prior and Gay acting as ambassadors, Addison as Secretary of State: he reached England in time to see the national funeral given to the remains of Newton. Bolingbroke took him in hand; he was astonished to find a learned and literary noblesse: Locke was his true teacher.

He went back to France another man, after three years' absence: above all, he carried with him the then popular English way of thinking as to the supernatural, and became a somewhat cold common-sense deist, opposed to the atheism of some and the dull bigotry of the established creed in the hands of others. God was to him conscious creator of the world; and only faintly, if at all, its ruler: he recognised the need of a Deity as a starting-point for his system, though he did not feel the need of His care and presence in life: not God our Father, only God our Creator.

He brought over with him a great ripening of humane feelings: this is his noblest quality, and parent of his best acts. When we see him as champion of oppressed Huguenots, combatting wrong and ill-doing with all the vehemence of

his fiery soul, we find a common ground, which is lost sight of as we contemplate his equally hot attacks on Christianity, or his dwelling in King's Courts, or his panegyrics on great sovereigns who had so fiercely crushed down that liberty of thought of which he was the life-long defender.

In his Œdipus (1718) he had assaulted priestcraft with not undeserved severity; we must always remember what he saw around him. In his Henriade (1725), perhaps almost unintentionally, he had glorified Henry IV at the expense of the Great Monarch. After his stay in England we have his Brutus (1730), an attack on kingcraft, and his Zaïre (1732), a Parisian Othello, both based on Shakespere. From this time onward he plunges into a supple and dexterous, if sometimes rather disingenuous, strife with a superior power. Throughout, the poet and man of taste struggles against the philosophic free-thinker: he loves the surface-impressions, perhaps the reflexive illusions; 'his sentiments are worth more than his ideas[1].' The 'English Letters' of 1735, written some years before, and now issued with much hesitation, created a great storm: they boldly attacked the royal power, the clergy, the faith; they were burnt by the hangman: and Voltaire had to go into voluntary exile for a while. There his literary activity was unwearied: many of his works were written, or at least sketched, during the next five years. Strange problem of the human mind! while he here composed his Mahomet[2] and other serious works, he also wrote his scandalous Pucelle; as if he could not rest without destroying all nobility of sentiment and faith in heroism. While Joan Darc is the helpless victim of his shameless attack, he is also busy with his Siècle de Louis XIV, a hero apparently more to his taste than the great Maid of Orleans.

[1] Martin, Histoire de France, xv. p. 388.

[2] The Mahomet, an attack on all Revelation under cover of an attack on Mahomet, was dedicated to Pope Benedict XII, who sent the author a medal; it perhaps suited the Pope to make believe that Voltaire was destructive towards only one form of faith; one can hardly believe that he was duped.

The influence of Voltaire on opinion grew slowly but steadily through these years: no one more sedulously undermined the established faiths. It was in these years that he enjoyed a passing favour at the French Court, whence his febrile energy, his roughnesses, his want of the true gloss of courtiership, soon lost him the good-will of his old friend Madame de Pompadour. He then tried Berlin, finding it equally untenable ground; eventually he withdrew to Ferney in the territory of Geneva, whence he kept up incessant war against all the injustices which touched his heart: his defence of Calas, of Servin, of the luckless Lally, all date from this time. In these days he animated the Encyclopedists with his spirit, encouraging them in their gigantic undertaking [1], the 'Carroccio of the battle of the eighteenth century [2].' It was a huge Dictionary of human knowledge, written in direct antagonism to all belief in spiritual powers or religion. It sold incredibly, and the effect of it on society was immense: this great edifice, 'built half of marble, half of mud,' as Voltaire himself said, had as its chief architects Diderot and D'Alembert [3]. Nothing contributed more to undermine the foundations on which all institutions, and not least royalty, were built.

A little later than Voltaire came Rousseau, 'the Valet who did not become a Cardinal.' His influences are also later, and touched society far more widely. Voltaire had spoken to society; Rousseau spoke to the heart of the people. He was above all things a sentimentalist, this son of a Genevan clockmaker. Society treated him harshly; and he avenged himself by making fierce war on society. The savage state is the best — society being revolting in its falseness and shallow varnish: all men are naturally equal [4] and free;

[1] The Encyclopédie, as far as it went, 28 folio volumes, was published between 1751 and 1772.

[2] So Démogeot calls it, Littérature Française, p. 490.

[3] For a good account of it see Géruzez, Histoire de la Littérature Française, ii. pp. 439 sqq.

[4] The 'Contrat Social' begins with these words, 'L'homme est né libre.'

society is nothing but an artificial contract, an arrangement by which, in the end, the strong domineer over the weak: the state of nature is divine: there is a Garden of Eden for those who will cast society behind them. Sciences and Arts, Civilisation and Literature, Encyclopedists included, are hateful as corrupters of mankind; all progress has been backward, if one may venture to say so,—downward, certainly. Rousseau embroidered these paradoxes with a thousand sweet sentiments: he shut his eyes to history, to facts, to the real savage, the very disagreeable 'primitive man,' as he may yet sometimes be seen. 'Follow nature' was his one great precept; then you will scourge away the false and conventional, and life will grow pure and simple; there will be no rank, no cunning law devised to keep men from their rights, no struggle for life, no competition. All France panted and groaned to emulate the 'noble savage':—with what success we know.

These were the chief literary luminaries of this time: and they all helped to pull down the fabric of the old society. That society, however, little understood the tendency of things; to a large extent it became the fashion to be philosophic, to be free-minded, to attack religion: with pride in their rank, and cold scorn for their humbler brethren, and high-bred contempt for their clergy, and ruinous vices sometimes made amusing by their brightness and their vivacious vanity, the French upper classes thought it great sport to pull merrily at the old walls of their country's institutions, never dreaming that they could be so ill-ordered as to fall down and crush them in their ruin.

CHAPTER V.

SKETCH OF EVENTS FROM A.D. 1748–1763.

THE Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 left seeds of trouble between France and England. No one in all Europe believed in its permanence; the history of these years is the record of the political and other measures taken in preparation for the next outbreak of war. Prussia, Austria, Russia, were all uneasy: in these days of cabinet-politics it was everything for Europe that so clear-headed, so firm, so unscrupulous a Prince as Frederick II sat on the Prussian throne. In the remarkable shiftings of the political balance as well as in the ultimate appeal to the sword, his influence was decisive, and stamped the character of the future relations of Europe. He and Count Kaunitz on the one side of the continent, and Louis XV, Madame de Pompadour, and the cabinet of George II on the other side, during these years strive for the mastery; the struggle in the end becomes disastrous for France.

Her points of difference with England were almost matters of world-empire. First came the natural rivalry between the two countries as to the lordship of the sea: the neighbours who divide the British Channel, and are divided by it, inevitably were rivals, both in the original acceptance of that word, and in its later sense. In these days of distant enterprise it was of the first importance to the future of these two great states that the world should know which of the two prevailed on the high seas. To that one the far-off wealth

of India, America, and Africa would fall. France, who in the days of Fleury and of the English alliance had allowed her navy to dwindle away to nothing, now busied herself in its reconstruction: the great commercial development of the nation in these years made it necessary, and the certainty of coming war with England added spur to the efforts.

This, however, was a matter of general rivalry: on two distant shores the antagonism was becoming daily more marked and definite. These two theatres of the struggle were India and North America. In India the decay and fall of the great Mogul Empire, and the consequent division of Hindostan into what were in fact independent Principalities, however much they might attend to the forms of feudal subordination, made easy opening for trafficking and intrigue: the English and French settlers on the coast, allied now with this now with that power, and eking out their own scanty resources with the ambitious or venal help of their allies, struggled for predominance. At first, it had seemed as if the French footing was too firm to be shaken: Labourdonnais and Dupleix far outstripped their English competitors, and could they have worked harmoniously together, might have founded a great Indian empire for France. They quarrelled, and Labourdonnais was recalled; the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle reinstated the English at Madras, and secured Pondicherry to the French. Yet their preponderance in India seemed confirmed during the next eight years, thanks to the high abilities of Dupleix, and his power over the native princes. The outbreak of the Seven Years' War and the rise of Clive reversed the superiority: thenceforward the career of France in India is a record of failures.

The other and at first the more interesting scene of difference was that in North America. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had here left much that was uncertain. First, France ceding Acadia to England at the Peace of Utrecht had naturally wished as far as possible to limit her losses, and had intended to give up only the peninsula of Nova Scotia, not that mainland

portion of it which stretches westward to the S. Lawrence: England, however, claimed all, to the south shore of that great estuary; and the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle had left the point unsettled. Next, there was an imminent source of disagreement on the question as to the connexion between the French possession of Canada and their vast territory of Louisiana. England now owned all the coast-line from Nova Scotia, and indeed from Labrador, down to the point at which Georgia touches Florida: a flourishing chain of colonies gave promise of their future greatness. All however behind them belonged, in name at least, to France. She owned the great Lakes, the Ohio valley, the grand Mississippi: she touched the sea at the S. Lawrence estuary, and again, though much straitened by the Spanish possessions, on the north shore of the Gulf of Mexico. About this time, in order to strengthen the connexion between these two distant points, France began to establish a chain of forts along the Ohio; thus hoping to restrain any attempt of the English on the interior. The colonies, especially Virginia, stoutly resisted this coercion; they thought themselves in danger of being driven into the sea. Lastly, there was a third great disagreement as to the neutral islands in the Caribbean Sea; Santa Lucia, the Antilles, Dominique, S. Vincent, Tobago, had remained unsettled by an 'uti possidetis' clause in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The French exercised acts of possession, the English demurred and threatened.

Conferences followed at Paris in 1750, though in vain; they lasted some years, the French government caring chiefly to gain time in which to nurse the quickly-growing navy, wherewith it hoped to solve the outstanding questions without diplomacy. In 1754 Great Britain cut the knot, and, without declaration of war, began to annoy French commerce, to capture forts, seize ships, hinder French interests as she best could in America. The English jealousy at the swift-growing trade of France added stimulus to this irregular and improper warfare.

Thus both in India and in America, war was really waged

between the two nations, while yet they were nominally at peace. In the Carnatic struggle[1] the balance long hung undecided; had stronger counsels prevailed at Versailles, the English would have found it very difficult to retain any foothold in India.

While these two nations thus wrestled, as it were, in the dark, great changes were going on in the relations of European states, changes of the highest importance to England. Hitherto the antagonism had been that of Austria allied with England and Russia against France joined with Prussia: henceforth this is completely reversed; Russia wavers, as her interests or feelings may lead her, while England joins Prussia, and Austria makes friends with France.

After 1748 the Austrian cabinet-policy was guided by Count

[1] The chief dates are:

I. For India:—

1742. Dupleix appointed Governor of Pondicherry and the French settlements.
1745. Labourdonnais was made Governor of the Isle of Bourbon and the Mauritius or Isle of France.
1746. Labourdonnais takes Madras from the English; he and Dupleix differ; he returns to Europe, and is thrown into the Bastille.
1748. Pondicherry besieged by the English. Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Madras restored to the English.
1750. Dupleix seems omnipotent in all the Deccan.
1751. Clive takes Arcot, and repulses Rajah Sahib.
1752. Laurence and Clive compel the French under D'Auteuil to surrender.
1754. Dupleix is recalled; peace made between the rivals in India at Pondicherry.
1756. Suraj-ad Dowla takes Calcutta; the Black Hole.
1757. Battle of Plassy.
1758. Lally arrives in India.

II. For North America:—

1749. England and France differ as to the boundaries of Acadia.
1750. Conferences at Paris over the differences.
1753. The same continued.
1754. Collisions between Colonists and French. Washington a French prisoner.
1755. Boscawen captures the French war-ships Alcide and Lys. General Braddock's disaster near Fort Du Quesne. General Johnson defeats and takes Baron Dieskau.
1756. General Bradstreet defeats the French on the Onondega. The French under Montcalm take fort Oswego.
1757. Montcalm takes Fort William Henry.

Kaunitz, that acute and able statesman, 'the European coachman,' who has the credit, such as it is, of reversing the old lines of diplomatic relation[1]. He was a man of two natures: a dandy, a debauchee, and a Frenchman in tastes, on the one side; on the other, a deep and sagacious thinker on political matters, an acute observer, a dexterous puller of diplomatic wires; 'so frivolous in his tastes,' says Frederick the Great[2], 'and so profound in business.' His embassy to Paris was the turning-point of his career. At Aix-la-Chapelle he had meditated whether his country was the gainer by the English alliance; he had seen how England followed her own interests and left Austria in the lurch; he reflected with bitterness on the position his country had taken; he asked himself whether a new combination might not bring him greater advantages; he turned towards France. His sojourn at Versailles in 1750 shewed him how the change of front might be effected. England and France now seemed to group the nations of Europe around them; and Kaunitz thought well to alter the balance by transferring the friendship of Austria from the English to the French cabinet.

Since 1648 France had been the champion and guarantor of the small Protestant states of North Germany: now, however, thanks first to the Great Elector, and then to the amazing vigour shewn by Frederick II in the two Silesian wars, one of these little states, Prussia, has become a powerful monarchy, no longer to be beholden to France for its life. England, eager to secure her dominion of the sea, and feeling that her struggle must be with France, turned with hope towards this vigorous young inland power, which could not be a rival, and might be a very valuable friend. Sir Horatio Walpole exclaimed in 1746, 'You will say, where is the remedy to this calamitous situation?

[1] Count Kaunitz had been made an Aulic Councillor by Charles VI, who trusted him, as did Maria Theresa. He was sent to administer the Austrian Netherlands in 1745, 1746; he watched over Austrian interests at the Conferences of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748; in 1750 he was sent as ambassador to Paris.

[2] Œuvres posthumes, iii. p. 41 (ed. 1788).

To which I reply, Prussia, Prussia, Prussia.' So again in 1748, the Lord Chancellor had said, 'If you gain Prussia, the confederacy will be restored, and made whole, and become a real strength; if you do not, it will continue lame and weak, and much in the power of France[1].' A coolness sprang up between England and Austria, their interests constantly diverging; the old question as to the garrisons of the Barrier-towns in the Austrian Netherlands made no small irritation; for Austria proposed to take possession of the Belgic provinces, and neither Holland nor England was minded to allow it. England also refused to support the Austrian plans as to Silesia; and Hanover, so near Prussia, might well be safer with her as a friend than as a foe.

On the other side Kaunitz laid it down that hostility to Prussia must be the first condition of continued cordiality between Austria and England[2]; Austria would protect Hanover against Prussia, because she would not willingly let that upstart power grow stronger anywhere: against France Austria would do nothing, unless England, declaring open war against Prussia, would help in a Silesian campaign. Such a policy the English diplomatists pronounced to be madness; they were offended by the airs of superiority which Kaunitz gave himself; it was clear that the interests of England and Austria were more and more divergent, and as in reality alliances and political friendships are based on interests, the days of their union were numbered.

Kaunitz, finding the English cold, now turned again to his old scheme of abandoning the sea-powers,—which after all seemed to him not able to interfere much in the direction of that inland province Silesia,—and of joining France. So doing he would make the Austrian Netherlands safe; for the Barrier was drawn against France, and France would be a friend not a foe; France would threaten Hanover, and, thus occupying England, would also embarrass Prussia: it was believed that

[1] Coxe's Pelham, i. 502.
[2] L. von Ranke, Ursprung der Sieben-jähriges Krieges, p. 51.

Sweden, from friendship for France and jealousy against the sea-powers, would take part against Prussia, the circles of the Empire would follow on the same side; Austria even ventured to hope that George, through the royal tenderness for Hanover, might be neutral, or even allow his German Electorate to side with France. Kaunitz ended by sketching out the rewards and prizes for this coalition. Austria to recover Silesia; Sweden, Stettin and Vor-Pommern; Saxony, Magdeburg; the Elector Palatine, Cleves and Mark; Franconia, Bayreuth; and Hanover, Halberstadt. Thus would Prussia be reduced to impotence, and Austria be avenged of her youthful rival.

Kaunitz, when at Versailles in 1751, had discerned the way by which to approach his object. Madame de Pompadour and Bernis were evidently offended at the plain-speaking of the Prussian King; French politicians disliked the growing independence of the young kingdom; that Prussia should cease to be the humble dependent on France was bitter to their pride: it was felt that French interests in Poland were not in harmony with those of Prussia, and that the wish to restore that unhappy country to a position of strength was not in accordance with the necessary politics of the Brandenburg Court. Though Louis XV prided himself on carrying on the traditions of his great-grandfather and on holding all the threads of foreign policy, if nothing else, in his own hands, yet Kaunitz knew that before long the influence of the ruling favourite would prevail: he therefore set himself to win her to his views.

At first the French Court was cautious and cold; could Kaunitz have some mischievous afterthought? The whole change that it involved was so tremendous that men might well be suspicious. After 1748 Kaunitz had suggested that Flanders and Brabant, so worthless and embarrassing to Austria, could be given to a power which would help Maria Theresa to recover Silesia: France however then needed peace too much, and the bait was not taken. In 1751 Kaunitz was sent to win over Madame de Pompadour; his ready wit, dandy manners, and free life soon made the ruling mistress his friend. The King,

however, was now under the influence of the Prince of Conti, and full of his plans and of his secret diplomacy; he would not listen, and again Kaunitz failed. Yet he did not abandon the idea; and, in 1755, when Frederick II proposed to unite himself closely with France against England and Austria, the French Court hesitated and suggested some half-measures; it refused all aggressive alliances; proposed to Frederick to join him against England,—so as to secure Hanover, and thereby to embarrass the seagoing ambitions of her rival,—but not to join him against Austria. This had the fatal fault of being absurd: how could Frederick consent to become a mere catspaw of France, while France left the grand Silesian question to its fate? Matters now came towards a point: the English attack on French commerce at sea; the capture by Boscawen of two ships of the line, the Alcide and the Lys; the varied fortunes of the two nations on the American continent;—these events set all France in a blaze: she would smite England in a vital place, would seize Hanover, would wash her honour clean in the blood of London. Now the new policy of Madame de Pompadour overbore the old traditional policy of the Prince of Conti, and Kaunitz triumphed. France in her blind rage 'committed an act of madness, of imbecile treason against herself, the like of which hardly exists in history[1].'

For at the outset of her critical struggle for the command of the seas, when all her strength ought to have been free for vigorous action in India and America, she plunged into a continental war, which could bring her, if successful, no solid gain, while it inevitably withdrew all her force from the important points. England and Prussia, the two advancing powers, were thrown together; France and Austria, two receding powers, joined in a conservatism which could not fail to be disastrous. It is said that religious passions had no small influence in the matter, that Maria Theresa loathed the aggressive Protestants, both Prussia and the heretical sea-powers, while Louis XV, as every one knows, was as much devoted to his religious opinions

[1] Martin, Histoire de France, xv. p. 489.

and observances as to his scandalous vices, mingling the two in a quite edifying union.

The period of Neutralities, in which Prussia and France had declined to renew their active alliance, and in which England (January 1756) had signed a Neutrality-Treaty with Prussia, with a view to the exclusion of the foreigner from Germany, soon led on to a more definite state of things. 'Great Britain,' as Burke says, 'which had done so much for Maria Theresa in her distress, would do little for her ambition': the 'Old Whigs,' now becoming very powerful in England under the splendid leading of Pitt, were most desirous of a Prussian alliance: the popular feeling was strong in the same direction. In France also things moved forwards: on the 1st of May, 1756, 'a remarkable era in the political history of Europe,' the Treaty of Versailles was signed. This 'Alliance des trois Côtillons'—that of Elizabeth of Russia, of Maria Theresa, and of Madame de Pompadour—was immensely popular at Paris: we might almost think we had gone back to the days of the Guises. The old anti-Austrian policy is at an end; the strong Catholic lines reappear: Madame de Pompadour becomes very devout, under Jesuit influences; it is felt that the Catholic powers are uniting against the aggressive and progressive spirit as it displays itself in England and Prussia[1].

With these thoughts France deluded herself into an alliance from which she could gain no advantage, and must suffer, in the essential struggle elsewhere, distinct loss. Had the alliance proved successful, had the heroism of Frederick the Great not averted the imminent peril, even then France would have been weakened, while Austria gained: as it turned out, she sank to the mean position of being a secondary ally and helper of Austria in an unsuccessful war. It is hard to say which would

[1] The author possesses the Medal struck by Frederick in honour of the two battles of Rosbach and Lissa: it bears the figure of the King on horseback, and round it the significant legend FREDERIC · DG · BORVS · REX · ET · PROTESTANTIVM · DEFENSOR. He posed himself as the champion of Protestantism against the Catholic powers of France and Austria.

have been worse for France, the success or the failure of this attempt to dismember Prussia: she was in the position of an unskilful gambler, who arranges his wagers in such a way that he must lose, whoever wins.

On the 15th of May, 1756, England declared war against France: in January 1757 a convention between the English government and Prussia at last bridged over the ancient rivalry between the Houses of Hanover and Brandenburg; and actual alliance followed in the next year: throughout the coming war the two powers are closely allied, though their scenes of action are far asunder. Pitt followed one line, Frederick another: still, they were one in aim and end, though their paths did not lie together,—Frederick grappling with Austria, and England with France.

At the outset France was not without honour in the strife: her expedition against Minorca under Marshal Richelieu was completely successful: Port-Mahon was taken, and Saint-Philippe, 'England's second Gibraltar,' invested. Byng's fleet of seventeen sail was defeated by La Galissonière, and Saint-Philippe fell (28 June, 1756). The fury of the English nation was roused by the incompetence of her government and officers, and the disgrace and loss: the ministry fell; Pitt, in spite of the dislike of George II, was the inevitable successor, and came at once into power: it was felt that England expressed in him her intensest rivalry and dislike for France. Though Pitt was not desirous to see such vengeance taken, the public feeling was too strong, and the luckless Byng, who had only been weak, was condemned to death.

The French triumph at Minorca was far more than balanced by the rise of her great enemy Pitt: his hand it was that grasped the iron hand of Frederick, and made the Anglo-Prussian alliance a reality. For a while indeed, France won success after success against England: she hampered her trade in the north; she burnt her squadrons on the Canadian lakes, and took her forts: in India her friend Suraj-ad-Dowla took Calcutta from the English. On the French coasts, Pitt's

expedition against Rochefort failed ignominiously; in vain he tried to harass Havre and S. Malo.

Fortunately for England, and indeed for Frederick also, France now determined to throw all her strength on Hanover: the Hanoverians, Hessians, Brunswickers, united to resist the blow. They had England's support on the one side and Prussia's on the other. England sent pay and the Duke of Cumberland to the threatened countries: Prussia smote hard at Austria. France set on foot an army of eighty thousand men, commanded by Marshal D'Estrées: in April 1757 it crossed the Rhine, passed through Westphalia, and pushed onward to the Weser. Cumberland, outnumbered and cautious, fell back to the right bank of that river, and entrenched himself at Hastenbeck: there D'Estrées attacked and defeated him. A court-intrigue rewarded the successful general with his recall, just as he was about to reap the fruits of his victory: his successor, Marshal Richelieu, pushed the Hanoverians back to the Elbe: there they were miserably compelled to lay down their arms at Stade. The famous Convention of Kloster-Zeven (8 Sept. 1757) followed, by which the Germans were allowed to depart home in peace. The Duke of Cumberland also went home, and appeared no more as a general[1]. All Brunswick and Hanover lay defenceless at the foot of the victor. Richelieu, satisfied with this easy triumph, merely allowed his troops to pillage, himself setting them the example: his men nicknamed him 'Père-la-Maraude': had he held his forces well together, had he marched on Brandenburg, the history of the Seven Years' War might have been speedily cut short.

For Frederick was then at the lowest point of his fortunes. His attempt to reach the heart of the Austrian power through Bohemia had ended in failure; the disastrous battle of Kolin had obliged him to raise the siege of Prague and to draw back: his strength seemed almost exhausted, his treasury empty, his

[1] W. Menzel (Gesch. der Deutschen, c. 192, p. 1011, ed. 1843) says that this Royal Duke was called the Great Duke of Cumberland by reason of his great size, 'der nur seiner Körperlänge wegen der Grosse genannte Herzog von Cumberland.'

army disheartened. He thought there was little before him except to die like a king, amid the ruins of his fallen state. The allies, however, as they converged on him, showed neither skill nor vigour: the Russians stood still for the winter; Marshal Richelieu's army amused itself with pillage; the other French army, commanded by Soubise, and united with the Germans of the Circles under the Duke of Saxe-Hildburghausen, was slowly making its way towards Berlin; it was ill-led, and miserably composed, an army which embraced within itself all the vices and frivolities of the time. Against such an enemy Frederick brought but a small portion of his veterans; he deluded the French into thinking he was retreating, and when they came out to cut him off, suddenly smote them with swift ruin at Rosbach (5 November, 1757). It was a most humorous and eccentric battle, lasting only an hour and a half; and scarcely half Frederick's force was engaged. The grim and tattered Prussians were not a little amused at the extraordinary rubbish, the theatrical accessories, the mass of luxuries, the disreputable high life, which fell into their hands: they were as much at a loss to know what to do with them as the Swiss at Granson were with Duke Charles' treasures. The overthrow of the army was so complete that it gave Frederick no more trouble: yet the overthrow of the influences it represented was quite as striking and as full. It secured the triumph of the North Germans: it brought to an end that fashion of admiring all things French which long had ruled in Germany; it cleared the ground for the swift and splendid growth of a German national life. It was the discomfiture of the noblesse-party in France, and the news of the disaster was consequently received almost with plaudits at Paris. Not only did it change the whole current of German taste, literature, and habits; it also encouraged the English to take more vigorous steps. The Duke of Cumberland was superseded, the Kloster-Zeven capitulation was repudiated by George II; Ferdinand of Brunswick, one of the very best soldiers of the age, was appointed commander-in-chief of the allies, who hitherto had

had English money and Hanoverian troops, but no British soldiers. Now Pitt agreed to send over twenty thousand men: and henceforward England takes a really prominent part in the French half of the war. It splits into two distinct wars: that of Frederick against Austria, and that of Ferdinand of Brunswick and the English against the lesser German Princes of the Austrian side, and the French.

In 1758 the French proposed to wipe out the disgrace of Rosbach, and made great efforts for a new and more successful German campaign: a new commander-in-chief was also appointed, a scion of the great House of Condé, the Count of Clermont. The French forces were scattered over a large surface in North-Western Germany, and much disorganised: and before Clermont could draw them together and restore their discipline and confidence, Ferdinand of Brunswick was on him: in a short campaign which, says Frederick the Great[1], may be compared with that of Turenne in Alsace, he succeeded, with thirty thousand Hanoverians, who had but just been told they were hopelessly 'hors de combat,' in thrusting eighty thousand French and their allies out of the country beyond the Rhine. He first seized the line of the Weser, and Bremen; then Prince Henry of Prussia, marching from Saxony northwards through Hildesheim, threatened Brunswick; and Clermont fell back, abandoning Brunswick, Hanau and Wolfenbüttel: next Ferdinand took Minden, and pushed onwards to the southwest, to Bielefeld. Then Clermont felt he could make no further stand, evacuated place after place, and eventually got across the Rhine at Wesel, with the loss of eleven thousand prisoners. Ferdinand stuck to him very closely, and overtaking him at Crefeld inflicted on him a terrible defeat, and rolled him back, till his flight was arrested by Soubise's army, which, moving on Cassel and taking it, checked the forward march of the victorious Germans. Before the year had half run its course, the French had been swept out of Westphalia, Hanover, Hesse, and both banks of the Rhine were again in German

[1] Œuvres Posthumes, iii. p. 273.

hands. The campaign showed in pitiable distinctness the incapacity and bad discipline of the French officers, who brought with them the habits of court-life to the hard realities of serious warfare.

After this not much was done for a while: Ferdinand might well be satisfied with driving the Frenchmen out of Hanover and Brunswick. Contades, a capable general, was set over Clermont's army; had Soubise been even a respectable officer they might have still done much, for in force they were far more than a match for Ferdinand. The Germans could never wrest Wesel from French hands: it was a constant source of danger for them. It was now that twelve thousand English, who roused no small admiration and enthusiasm, were landed at Embden, and (in August 1758) joined Ferdinand at Soest: for the remainder of the war they were his mainstay, holding the French at bay with admirable patience and tenacity.

Meanwhile, the whole attention of France being centred on her disastrous career in Germany, the English fleets, in one expedition after another, annoyed and ruined her navy and dockyards. The English gradually won the ascendancy during this year: the French colony at Senegal was captured; Montcalm, one of the ablest French officers, could not rescue either Fort Du Quesne[1] or Louisburg from the English attack: in India the Suwab of Bengal was defeated and punished, though the arrival of d'Aché with a fleet and with a new Governor-General, the Irish Lally, for a time restored the balance in those seas. The French wrested from the English both Gondalor and Fort S. David. Lally was the best officer the French had ever sent to India: yet his harsh temper, his overbearing manners, and, perhaps, still more, his inflexible probity and severity against licence and pillage, made him odious to the officers under his command. From this alienation chiefly came his ultimate failure.

At the end of the year the Abbé Bernis, the foreign minister

[1] The English named the place Pittsburg, in honour of the great Minister.

of Louis XV, alarmed at the course of the war and foreseeing imminent ruin, began to deal with England for peace. Madame de Pompadour however thwarted him, thinking to show the same heroism and tenacity which characterised her great ally, Maria Theresa. And as Frederick the Great says, 'his imprudences made his fortune; when he began to act wisely he fell;' he was exiled to his bishopric of Aix, and Choiseul, an able and unlucky politician, took his place. A renewed treaty with Vienna was the result: the gist of which was that France should bear the chief burden of the war, and Austria cull its fruits [1].

Fresh efforts in the direction of Germany, as ill-directed as of old, marked the opening of the campaign of 1759. Contades commanded the one army, intended to occupy Ferdinand; Broglie [2] was on the Maine, near Frankfort. Ferdinand took up his position between the two armies, and was defeated by Broglie on the Nidda: the French government, in its joy and gratitude, made the Duke a Marshal. Contades now joined him at Giessen, and the two armies, thus combined, pushed forwards to the Weser, overrunning all Hesse and Westphalia, and taking Cassel, Minden, Paderborn, and Münster. Ferdinand fell back to Osnabrück, while the whole French force was concentrated on Minden. Thus far their progress had been most successful and well-combined: now however the two generals seemed no longer able to work harmoniously. Contades' dispositions were good and capable; Broglie showed a lazy slackness, which proved fatal to the French cause. For Ferdinand came back with an Anglo-German army of some forty thousand men: the French had a considerable advantage in numbers, and the position was of their choosing. On the 1st of August, 1759, it came to a battle: the French horse were massed, about ten thousand strong, in the centre of their position, and over against them were six regiments of English infantry, who,

[1] Œuvres Posthumes de Frédéric II. iii. p. 347.

[2] The Duke of Broglie who had fought (?) at Rosbach under Soubise, was in this year made a Prince of the Empire for his services against Frederick II. He survived the Revolution, became an emigré, and in 1794 entered the Russian service; he died in 1804, aged 86 years.

under some mistake, intentional or not, marched stubbornly down on the French cavalry, heedless of the artillery which opened on their flank. In vain the French charged and charged again; the British foot stood firm, and with steady musketry-fire repulsed them: in a short time was beheld that strange and hitherto unseen sight, a splendid cavalry three deep broken up and put to flight by a thin line of infantry. Had not Lord George Sackville, who commanded the allied horse, refused, no one knew why, to charge, the ruin of the whole French army, with the Weser at its back, must have been complete. The exploit of the six 'Minden' regiments made a great noise in Europe: the French fell back, Contades to Wesel, Broglie to Frankfort: Göthe, who had watched them pass out thence before the battle of Bergen on the Nidda[1], doubtless also on their very different return saw their dejected mien, and heard their mutual recriminations. The good general Contades was set aside; the bad one, Broglie, placed in supreme command. Henceforward the general superiority of the defence over the attack in North-Western Germany was secured, and the French arms were never able to make a serious impression on Hanover. That flank being secured for Frederick the Great, he was enabled, by heroic efforts, to prolong his resistance against the overwhelming forces of Russia, Austria, Sweden, and the Circles of the Empire, until the Peace of Hubertsburg gave him the eventual victory. The French armies were large, in 1761 they amounted to a hundred and forty thousand under Broglie and Soubise; yet, thanks chiefly to the 'most perfect incapacity,' as Napoleon said, of the commanders-in-chief and of the officers under them, this huge force, as armies were then reckoned, was repulsed with great disgrace by a far smaller army of Germans. The river Weser receives the waters of the Fulda and the Werra, the former at Münden[2], the latter above

[1] He describes his boyish impressions with graphic touch in the third book of his Wahrheit und Dichtung; he was then not quite ten years old (i. pp. 110 sqq., ed. 1866).

[2] To be distinguished from Minden (where the battle was fought), which lies lower down the Weser. The two names are often spelt alike.

Cassel. The irregular quadrilateral formed by these rivers was the natural stronghold of the French armies: their way to it was by the Rhine about Mainz, then by Frankfort, then Hanau, and Fulda, and all this was in friendly territory: the angle at Münden was the point of the wedge by which the French forces hoped to penetrate into Brunswick and Hanover. The folly of the commanders, which indeed did but reflect the folly reigning at Versailles,—where intrigues of the lowest kind paralysed action, while absurd plans of war were actually traced out in Madame de Pompadour's boudoir,—brought all attempts to act on the offensive to disgrace. If the American war some twenty years later turned the French soldier into a Republican, the Seven Years' War destroyed all the honour and credit of the French noblesse: their vices, incapacity and folly were displayed on an open field, and where they used to shine with the wasteful glories of war, they now covered themselves with shame and well-deserved contempt. For this result the French government paid elsewhere a tremendous price: a price no less than the ruin of her navy, and loss of all her fair prospects in India and Canada. From 1759 onwards the gradual ascendancy of the British flag became evident to all: the French admirals were like the generals, the imbecile creatures of Madame de Pompadour; their attempts were ill-combined and futile. In 1759 it was planned that the main French fleet under M. de Conflans should make a descent on the English coast, while a fourth fleet; under the command of a real sailor, Thurot, who had already inflicted great losses on English commerce, threatened the coasts of Scotland and Ireland. One portion of the French fleet, on its way round from Toulon, was caught and ruined in Lagos bay; out of seven ships only three escaped: Conflans venturing out from Brest, fell in with the main English fleet off Belle-Isle: a battle followed in Quiberon Bay in which his ships were terribly handled; he himself fled with his vanguard without striking a blow, to the Isle of Aix: it was the complete ruin of the French navy. 'The English shot Byng for fighting a losing battle: the French punished Conflans, who did not fight,

but shamefully ran away, by calling the day of Quiberon Bay "la bataille de M. de Conflans"[1]. Even Madame de Pompadour was moved by this disaster: she expressed her opinion that the Parliaments and the Encyclopedists had changed the character of the nation: 'men recognise neither a God nor a master—what can one expect?' With which pious thought she consoled herself for the evils she herself had made[2].

The remaining squadron, under Thurot, had annoyed the northern coasts of England and Scotland; it had then landed at Carrickfergus, releasing some French prisoners confined there; soon after this his little fleet was attacked (28 Feb. 1760) by three English ships of the line, a much stronger force; and after a brave struggle he perished: his squadron was all captured. And so ended the French navy. The English, now absolute masters of the sea, soon made their power felt in Canada and India. In North America, the dignity of France had been well-sustained by the ability and heroism of Montcalm, in spite of the neglect of the home-government; now, however, the English reinforcements gradually neutralised all his efforts. The English took Fort Niagara, and Amherst compelled the French to evacuate Ticonderoga; Crown-Point fell on the very day on which the Battle of Minden was fought; and thus that line of forts which were the expression of French policy in America was finally broken through. Meanwhile, another expedition under General Wolfe anchored below Quebec; after some weeks of wearing inactivity, on the night of the 12th of September Wolfe led his army by a narrow path up to the Heights

[1] La Vallée, Histoire des Français, iii. p. 518.

[2] British successes in 1759:—
Lally raises siege of Madras, 16 February.
Masulipatam falls, 7 April.
Guadaloupe taken, 20 April.
Fort Niagara taken, 24 July.
Ticonderoga taken, 27 July.
Crown-Point and Battle of Minden, 1 August.
Battle of Lagos Bay, 17 August.
Heights of Abraham, 13 September.
Quebec surrenders, 18 September.
Poetche defeats the French fleet off Mauritius, 27 September.
Battle of Quiberon Bay, 20 November.

of Abraham, which commanded Montcalm's position, and overhung the town of Quebec on its weakest side. The battle of the 13 Sept. 1759 was brief and decisive: Wolfe fell in the moment of victory, having, in a few hours and with the loss of only a handful of men, destroyed the French power in Canada. Montcalm also was mortally wounded, and died two or three days later. Quebec capitulated on the 18th; after a short struggle, all Canada submitted, when in 1760, Montreal with the French who had taken refuge there surrendered to the English. Thus in a few months the influence of France in North America was annihilated, and the foundation laid for those two great English communities, the United States of America and the Dominion of Canada; the result of that day's work, had the gift of prophecy been given to the young hero, who there in sweet serenity lay bleeding to death, would have opened out before him a strange vista, filled with colossal images of power and energy; would have shown him a new world 'destined to redress the balance of the old,' destined yet to fill a broad space in the world's history.

In India affairs were almost equally disastrous for France. Lally's terrible temper had completely alienated d'Aché, who commanded the French ships: the siege of Madras was a failure, and proved to be the turning-point of the war. Lally struggled in vain against the ill-will of the French settlers, and the open dislike of d'Aché, who withdrew with his fleet to the Mauritius; the English took the offensive, defeated M. de Conflans, who withdrew to Masulipatam: that strong place was taken after a weak and hesitating resistance. Then the one remaining French stronghold on all that coast, Pondicherry, was invested, and after a brave defence, was surrendered by Lally. It was utterly destroyed by the English, as though they wished to proclaim to the world that they had reversed the words, 'No Englishman in India,' with which the brilliant Irishman had loudly proclaimed his aims at the beginning of his career. The English left of Pondicherry only the native quarter; the European houses, the walls, the public buildings

were completely swept away. And thus ended all dreams of a French Empire in the East. The unfortunate Lally, accused by angry France of treason, her one and invariable solace in misfortune, was tried before the Parliament of Paris, and, in defiance of all justice, condemned and executed.

So ended the year 1759, the most disastrous perhaps ever seen by France; the 'Annus Mirabilis,' if ever there was one, of the English people.

Things now began to draw towards peace; for the accession of George III, with his unconstitutional ideas, and his dislike for Pitt and the Whigs, soon brought about a great change. Choiseul, one among the cleverest, if not the greatest, of French statesmen, now signalised his ministry by a famous treaty called the 'Family Pact,' in which all the Bourbon sovereigns bound themselves by a perpetual offensive and defensive alliance, guaranteeing each other's territory, and promising that no one of them would ever make a separate peace: they added also commercial stipulations, which placed them all on the same footing, and opened their ports to one another. France and Spain, the two Sicilies, Parma and Piacenza, seemed about to form a single family of harmonious states.

This important step came, in part at least, to Pitt's knowledge: he proposed to the ministers to interfere at once, before the new coalition could become dangerous, to crush the Spanish sea-power, and to seize her colonies. The plan seemed to them too bold, and they hardly knew enough to believe that it could be justified; they accordingly refused to carry it out, and the great minister resigned office: he was succeeded first by the Duke of Newcastle and then by the Bute administration. Pitt carried into opposition the good-will and enthusiastic admiration of the whole of England, except the King's party, and the Tory and Whig statesmen; the Tories going with the King, the Whigs being anxious for peace.

The 'Family Pact' was now made public, and the new Government of England had to justify Pitt's prevision by

making war on Spain: the disasters of France were enacted over again, and Spain lost colony after colony. The English ministers, however, were sincerely desirous of peace, and negociations began: before the end of 1762 England had signed the preliminaries, though not before Soubise had once more proved his dismal incapacity on his old theatre in Germany. England had won all she wanted in the war: her interests pointed towards peace; she did not hesitate to abandon her ally the King of Prussia, a desertion which he never forgot.

At last, in February 1763, came peace long-wished for, not too soon. The Peace of Paris (10 Feb. 1763) between France and England, and that of Hubertsburg (15 Feb. 1763) between Prussia and Austria and Saxony, closed this eventful period. With the latter we have little to do: the former requires some detailed consideration.

In the Peace of Paris were two parts: a treaty between France and England, and another between England and Spain. That between France and England showed clearly how far France had fallen. She agreed to cede all claims on Nova Scotia, Canada, and Cape Breton, retaining only her share in the fisheries, and some unimportant islands. The Mississippi was to be the boundary between the British colonies and Louisiana. In the West Indies she gave up Grenada; the islands of St. Vincent, Dominique, Tobago, also fell to England; Santa Lucia was restored. In Africa she yielded up Senegal, receiving back Goree; in the East Indies she recovered all she had possessed at the beginning of 1749, and even Pondicherry; all later conquests she renounced. In the Mediterranean, Minorca was restored to England. Hanover was evacuated, all French troops being withdrawn from Germany.

The Peace of Paris secured the maritime preponderance of England; that of Hubertsburg splendidly opened to Prussia a career of greatness and aggrandisement in Europe. France was both absolutely and relatively the chief loser by the war.

It had lessened her consideration abroad, it had weakened her government at home: her aristocracy was completely discredited by it; her army had fallen into contempt. Louis XIV had used the service as a kind of almshouse for his needy and impoverished nobles, whom he liked to see hanging about the Court and ruining themselves, till they became humble claimants for his bounty. Now they had fallen still lower, proving themselves unable even to fulfil with credit the one part still reserved for them. The ill-disciplined noble, who had distinguished himself by his bravery, if not by his sense, on field after field of French military triumphs, now came home from the wars a wretched imbecile creature, worn out with vices, loaded, and justly, by France with the disgrace of the disasters of these unhappy years. Nor was the army itself, that natural defender of power, to which the Monarchy ought to have looked for support in its critical troubles, in any happier state. As yet it had not taken that republican tinge which came to it after the American war; it was, however, far from being satisfied with its position or loyal to authority. The pay of the private soldiers was a mere pittance; their food and quarters most wretched: more than half the money set aside for the army went to the officers alone. No man could rise from the ranks: 'for the few, authority, honours, money, leisure, good cheer, the world's pleasures, the comedies of society: for the many, subjection, abjectness, fatigue, enlistment by press or chicane, no hope of promotion, six sous a day, a narrow bed for two, bread fit for dogs, and a dog's share of blows: on this hand the proudest noblesse; on that the lowest of the people[1].' The army was not yet prepared to lead a Revolution: it was prepared to learn the lesson which would be given it in 1779 and 1780, and to practise that lesson in 1789.

[1] Taine, L'ancien régime, pp. 511, 512. His sketch is, as ever, graphic and caustic.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST YEARS OF LOUIS XV. A.D. 1763–1774.

Two sayings, which characterise the two speakers, are recorded of this time. The one is that of Louis XV, who with all his odious vices, his laziness, and unkingly seclusion, was not devoid of intelligence: 'all this,' he said, 'will last as long as I shall,' and his forecast was justified: the deluge came long after he had gone to his account; and the phrase stands against him as an expression of his base selfishness, which saw the coming troubles without caring about them, because he believed that they would not come in his day. The other saying is that of Voltaire, who, in 1762, exclaimed in an ecstasy of hope and prophecy, 'Happy the young men, for they shall see many things.' And yet those youths were mostly gray-headed when the 'many things' began, and not a few of them lost those gray heads, instead of looking on as interested spectators of a new order of things.

The writers of this time, whatever their faults, form the true aristocracy of France: the rest of the nation, sinking lower and lower, left their superiority all the more marked and uncontested. It was now that their struggle with the opposing forces of the Company of Jesus came to a head: the age before had seen the Jesuits leading in education, forward in the sciences of the time, ready for any antagonists; now they had either sunk into apathy and inability to defend themselves, or had embarked, as in Portugal, in commercial pursuits, following doubtless the tendency of the time, but at great loss to their true power: they were too wealthy to be good fighting-men. Against them came the Encylopedists; Voltaire was unwearied in attack; the progress

of the natural sciences, of astronomy, mathematics, natural history[1], was all against them: the tendencies of that strange combination of liberal ideas with despotic government, so prominent at this time, were all arrayed against the order: the chief ministers who directed affairs were vehemently opposed to them; they had no worse enemies than Pombal in Portugal and Choiseul in France. Their books of casuistry were brought to the light; their commercial bankruptcy at Martinique raised great indignation in France; the Parliament and Madame de Pompadour took part against them. The spirit of Jansenism strangely revived, now that its great foe was on its trial: from all sides came attacks and denunciations: the order was denounced as hostile to the civil state, as ambitious of a commercial empire, as ruinous to morality, as opposed to the true interests of mankind. At last the Parliament of Paris took their affairs into its direct cognisance, and, without hearing the Order in its defence, decreed its abolition in August 1762. The Parliaments throughout France followed the example thus set: the Jesuits in despair appealed to the King: he at last, after some hesitation, issued an edict in November 1764, confirming the judgment of the Courts, and abolishing the Order in France. The Catholic powers mostly followed in the same direction; Frederick II in Protestant Prussia, and Catherine II in Russia, alone supported them: Frederick called them the best priests he knew: and Catherine hoped that they would be useful to introduce education into Russia. Eventually, Pope Clement XIV, with a fearful hand, signed (21 July, 1773) the brief which finally abolished the Order at its head-quarters. The abolition was no doubt a great blow; power, influence, wealth, all seemed to vanish away. And yet the Order did not really perish; the

[1] This is the time of Buffon's great work; his Natural History was begun in 1748, and volumes went on appearing till the eve of the Revolution: richly coloured, eloquent, and also methodical, he rises almost to nobility of style; his critics charge him with deficient sensibility, the quality which was the fashion of the time. Perhaps he was none the worse for this deficiency. The work is wanting in scientific character; for Buffon had no true spirit of research in him.

men remained, if the name was gone; and in due time they reappeared in the world with hardly diminished energies.

Philosophers and magistrates thus united for a while to achieve this great victory; and the Parliament of Paris thought itself once more the centre of French constitutional life. It retained no small influence for a while, till in due time a new mistress, the scandalous Madame du Barry, overthrew without hesitation or difficulty the Jansenist Parliament; and Jesuits and Jansenists were involved in one common ruin.

Madame de Pompadour retained her power till her death in 1764; her chief antagonist the Dauphin, a stupid and bigoted man, the leader of a party which warmly condemned the King's vices and opposed the philosophic tendencies of the time, only survived her a single year: he died in 1765, leaving a little Dauphin of eleven years, with his besotted grandfather on the throne. The Queen did not long survive them; she also died in 1768. These were the days of the ministry of Choiseul, the ablest man of the time, and in a sense the representative in France of the aspirations which prevailed throughout Europe. It is customary to speak of the enlightened sovereigns of this time: it would be at least as correct to call it the age of enlightened ministers. Pitt with George III, Pombal ruling in Portugal, Aranda in Spain, Choiseul at the Court of Louis XV, are quite as characteristic of the age as Joseph II or Frederick the Great.

Choiseul, after the manner of a younger member of a great house, first followed the profession of arms; soldiering, however, pleased him less than diplomacy, and he quitted the sword for the subtler battles and victories of the chancellerie. Smiled on by Madame de Pompadour, and helped by his own ready wit and ability, he quickly rose; was envoy at one court after another, and in 1758 became Minister for Home Affairs. A dukedom and peerage followed: in 1761 he was made war-minister, and at the close of the war the navy was also entrusted to him. His activity was amazing; he did much to reorganise the army, which sorely needed it; created a great military school; built ships; helped the colonies: he it was who conceived and

carried through the 'Family Compact,' and who obtained Corsica, and Napoleon Bonaparte[1], from Genoa in 1768 and 1769. Louis XV believed that Choiseul was another Richelieu, and disliked him accordingly; and yet there was a whole world of differences between the stern Cardinal and the clever and uncertain minister, who turned now one way, now another; who now had deep plans against England which came to naught, and then resisted Russia, only so far as to alarm his indolent sovereign and to do no good to Poland. He had a chief hand in the expulsion of the Jesuits, and represented the philosophic spirit of France at Court.

Meanwhile, Madame de Pompadour dying, a new mistress, the low-born Du Barry, stepped into her place. With a change of favourites came a change of the nation's policy: the Jansenists, Parliaments, Philosophers, all fell out of favour; Choiseul was exiled in 1770; and before long, to the astonishment of all France, the members of the Parliament of Paris were suddenly arrested (19 January, 1771), declared to be deposed from their high functions, and sent into exile. It was a state-revolution, which even Louis XIV had never attempted; it was a new and gigantic step towards the utter destruction of all stability in France;—yet no disturbance followed; the princes and peers protested, the provincial parliaments remonstrated; and there resistance ended. The Philosophers who had rejoiced over the fall of the Jesuits, rejoiced equally at the discomfiture of the lawyers.

With these great changes came a nominal increase to the royal authority. Louis XV mocked heaven by declaring that at his consecration he had taken oath to God alone, and not to his people. It seemed as if the nation had no hold at all on the monarch: all constitutional checks and safeguards were gone; there were neither resolute churchmen nor tradition-loving lawyers to withhold him; though commerce still flourished, and the merchant was wealthy, the finances were in the uttermost

[1] Born 15 August, 1769.

confusion; the people miserable, degraded; the Court a sink of iniquity; the King a debauched devotee.

Louis XV lived long enough to see the first Partition of Poland, that great overthrow of French influence in the north of Europe (5 August, 1772). His ministers, who had nothing of Choiseul's energy and power, had proposed to 'round off' France also, by seizing the Netherlands; this, however, England could not permit: when France prepared a fleet to protect Swedish interests from Russia, the ministers let it be known that an English fleet would at once follow the French ships into the Baltic. Then the French ministers conceived the idea of supporting the Turks against Russia, and the yards at Toulon resounded with active preparations. Thereon England again interfered, and France must needs leave the Turk to his fate. The Peace of Kainardji, which, in July 1774, gave to Russia a firm footing on the Black Sea shores, and marked the great advance of Russian ambition towards the East, resulted in part from this interference of Great Britain, and this hopeless decrepitude of France.

Before this was done Louis XV had been drifting gloomily to his end. It is said that his death (10 May, 1774) was the direct consequence and result of his scandalous vices. Let us silently draw the veil over the prostrate form of one who had been King of France for nearly fifty stirring years, inheritor of all the grandeur of the absolute monarchy, and its true destroyer.

One after another the institutions of his country had become weak, and had been swept away: they were old and worm-eaten, and had in them no vigour of renewed life, no roots running wide in the soil of the nation, whence new growths could come. The Church was paralysed, the noblesse, now chiefly modern in origin, hopelessly corrupt, the peasantry in many parts reduced almost to the savage state. The merchants in the chief cities were prosperous, and round them was gathered that civic population which was destined to take the chief share in the Revolution. The only really vigorous life in France

was that of literature, now entirely in the hands of the Philosophers, whose books and efforts on behalf of education all tended in one way: society became insensibly imbued with the principles which were soon to subvert the old system; schools sprang up in the towns under their fostering care; the little boys taught in them in 1770 became the men of 1789.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DYING MONARCHY. A.D. 1774–1789.

IN 1770 Louis, then Dauphin and Duke of Berry, a youth of sixteen years, was married to Maria Antoinetta, daughter of the great Maria Theresa of Austria, and of Francis, Duke of Lorraine and Tuscany, who had been chosen Emperor in 1745: she was one year younger than her boyish husband. This ill-starred marriage, girt round with evil omens from the very beginning, was, apart from the inevitable catastrophe which Louis XV had prepared, the chief source of the misfortunes which befell the young King. But for Marie Antoinette the Revolution of 1789 would hardly have taken the form it took; but for her the sudden outburst of patriotic military fervour, which marked the early years of the revolutionary period, would never have been called forth. She diverted the weak King from all his projects of reform; she drove away his best ministers; she plunged the Court ever deeper in debt; she was the centre of intrigues and unwholesome influences; her voice was raised in behalf of all that made the eventual explosion inevitable.

For the young King himself, who at the age of twenty came to this restless perilous throne, we can have no feeling but one of sympathy and regret. He was well-meaning and really anxious to rule well: as he said a little later, 'there is no one but Turgot and I who care for the people.' Brought up in sight of gross immorality, he had preserved a purity, almost an austerity, of character: his tastes and habits were simple and favourable to the practice of economy in the state: he was

willing to work hard at his kingly duties, to do and bear much in order to bring things straight; his intentions were always good, and his sense of duty strong. The tendencies of his age had filled him with modern ideas as to his relation to the French people; proposals for reform were welcome to him; his love for his people was tempered by a fear of anarchy. So far all was well and promising:—the remainder of the picture accounts for his failure. For he was devoid of all greatness of character; there was a want of dignity about him, which made it hard for him to lead and rule: he was timid where he should have been bold; irresolute, weak of will, and consequently deficient in perseverance: he was inevitably dependent on others. A man who is dull and obstinate can do not a little in the world: one who is dull and wavering must fail, even in quiet times: and Louis XVI was not destined to meet with peaceful breezes in his career. Consequently, failure is written on every successive movement of his fifteen years of reign; and he himself, from the ardent reformer of 1774 gradually dropped down into the stupid and uninterested sportsman of 1789, who seemed to think of nothing but the hunting-ground, when the whole of France was tossing and heaving around him.

His queen was omnipotent over him. She combined those qualities which were most disastrous for the monarch and his country; for she was ignorant, frivolous, and proud. Daughter of Maria Theresa, she inherited the worse elements of her mother's character; the pride and obstinacy which carried the great Queen through her worst straits were fatal to her daughter.

The opening of the reign was again a reaction against the past. The vices of Louis XV should have no more place at Court; noble privilege should be reduced, financial disorders checked and remedied, if possible; the old ministers were all swept away, the obscure and corrupt brood of Maupeous, Terrays, d'Aiguillons vanishes. The state of the peasantry had been gradually and decidedly improving, in the peaceful

years past: population had increased, the towns were wealthy and prosperous, and the country-districts better tilled. This advance was accompanied by a corresponding growth in intelligence and knowledge: society, as it grew firmer, became more conscious of the inequalities and injustice of the existing state of things. At the same time, the proud possessors of privilege were as contemptuous as ever, and utterly unable to see that the time for reform was come. The nobles had sole right to all commissions in the army, alone could sit in the supreme tribunals, filled all high offices of state, exerted their disastrous privilege, which freed them from the proper burdens of the state, and cut them absolutely off from those who tilled the soil, or in any way augmented the national wealth. Instead of bearing their share in the nation's burdens, they were themselves the chief burden on it. A class of society holding this position naturally makes itself odious to those beneath it: and the French nobles were eminently hateful to the rising elements of society; they were haughty, foolish, contemptuous; like the Queen, they were proud and petty; they insulted all that was most sensitive, they clung to and defended every abuse; they defeated their King and reduced him to insignificance, and finally perished with him. Their frivolity was as amazing as their vices were monstrous and their pride unbearable. It is calculated that at this time there were about a hundred and ten thousand noble persons: but it must not be thought that these were the descendants of the ancient houses, the old feudal lords. The noblesse had entirely changed in origin, if not in character. Thus, under Louis XV alone, there had been no less than four thousand offices for sale, offices which carried with them noble rank and privilege; so that the rich burgher and lawyer was always carrying his wealth and intelligence over to the side of the noble: and if he was looked down on as parvenu, his sons and grandchildren quickly caught the manner of their new class, and became as offensive as the rest.

The clergy were cut asunder as with a knife: while the

humble curé, man of the people, sympathised in the main with his fellows, and threw in his lot with them, the monks and dignified clergy took part with the privileged classes, and were among the most determined and vehement in their opposition to reform.

The 'taille,' ever a hateful tax, as it was laid, was levied according to the productiveness of the soil; it was therefore the part of the peasant to feign extreme poverty: he lived miserably, and hid his treasure in the earth. This tax not only taught men falseness, but directly discouraged all good agriculture: it was almost as fatal to show well-tilled fields, as to show signs of well-being in the farmhouse. The 'gabelle' was as offensive as ever, and struck at all society alike; this absurd and odious salt-tax was among the strongest engines of the Revolution; the 'corvée,' the compulsory service for road-building, bridges, and other public works, irritated the peasantry to a point almost beyond bearing.

Louis XVI began his reign with a sincere desire to find a way out of the difficulties which were gathering so thickly round his country. He called to his side the Count of Maurepas, who had begun public life under Louis XIV as a boy, who had done good work in the earlier times of Louis XV, had been disgraced by Madame de Pompadour, and who now, after five and twenty years, in which he had come to be a frivolous and useless old man, was summoned to guide the counsels of an inexperienced and well-meaning young King. His one title to our respect in these last days of his life is his advice to Louis XVI to entrust the charge of the finances to Turgot.

Turgot was at that time the most distinguished disciple of the Economists; he had been a pupil of Rousseau; in 1761 he had been Intendant of the Limoges district, where he carried many of his views into practice with most admirable results. He was now placed where there was a chance of applying his experience to the whole kingdom; his firm character, uprightness and good faith, were all favourable to his prospects of success; his fault was that he did not sufficiently appreciate the

force of resistance which the Queen and the noblesse would be able to bring to bear on the weakness of the King.

Turgot went to work with zeal and clearness of vision: he laid out plans of reform which aimed at much that the Revolution afterwards accomplished; he insisted on a largeness of change which did not fail to arouse the resistance of all the interested, and staggered the King himself. Instead of supporting his minister with a strong hand, Louis XVI recalled the banished Parliaments (Nov. 1774), and in fact re-established one of the strongest opponents to real reform: here was the beginning of all the misfortunes of his reign. A strong and despotic sovereign, resolutely carrying out great changes, might have entirely reconstructed France; a well-disposed and weak prince could only fall a victim to the evils which surrounded him.

From the moment that the Parliament of Paris came back, Turgot's fall became inevitable. His 'heart of l'Hôpital, and head of Bacon,' as said his panegyrists, could not conciliate the lawyers, or persuade the nobles to sacrifice their privileges, or command the King's assent to vigorous steps. After a struggle, which lasted longer than might have been expected, the minister was at last overwhelmed. There was a kind of conspiracy against him. The Queen and the nobles, the lawyers and financiers, banded themselves together: all the powerful machinery of the infamous, 'Pacte de famine,'—the phrase parodied Choiseul's 'Pacte de famille'—was brought to bear on the falling minister. This 'grain-ring,' or group of monopolists, had existed since 1765; the late King himself had taken the lead in the disgraceful traffic; even a government official was appointed to attend to the royal profits from this scandal. To this had been due the famine of 1767, 1768[1], 1769; it caused the grain-scarcity in 1775, which lasted three

[1] In this year (1768) one of the ring, troubled with a conscience, gave information against the doings of the Pacte, and the truth nearly came out. The Court, in alarm, clapped the inconvenient patriot into the Bastille, and so escaped publicity.

years; its disastrous influence is among the most distinct causes of the Revolution. At this time the Pacte was triumphant; it got up bread-riots, and utterly frightened Louis XVI: even the people, for whom he was working, seemed to rise up against him; no one appeared to have any hopes or to care for improvements. The Parliament opposed him: the Court was cool and distant, the Queen reproachful; even Malesherbes laid down his office as Minister of the Interior. At last, the King dared do no more, and Turgot was dismissed in 1776. The attempt to reform the country through the King and the Philosophers had entirely failed:—would the bankers with Necker, or the Court with Calonne and Brienne[1], or the people, against them all, be successful?

After a short period, in which everything fell back into confusion and discredit, Jacques Necker, a Genevan banker, who had made a large fortune in France, and was regarded as an especially sound and safe man, a man who, if any one, could restore the sinking credit of the state, was called on to undertake the Finance of France.

It is worthy of notice that the position of Finance-Minister has become all-important: the other ministers are indistinct personages; all centres in the one man who has to face the overwhelming necessities of income and expenditure. Necker was a more prudent and a more modern Law: he aimed at saving the state by a better system of credit and by the introduction of good accounts. He ventured on none of those far-reaching reforms which had been the ruin of Turgot: he represented the comfortable bourgeoisie, well-educated, right-minded, endeavouring to stop the mouth of the starved giant Revolution with paper budgets. He had indeed no depth of insight: yet he might have made things bearable had not all his resources been taxed to the uttermost, not to relieve the burdens of France, but to find funds for a great war. That war was not without its striking successes and its glory; yet, in the end, it made the Revolution inevitable.

[1] Michelet, Précis de l'Histoire moderne, p. 298 (ed. 1850).

The unimaginative English had made a series of gross blunders in America, and before the death of Louis XV the insurrection had broken out in the justly offended Colonies. The Declaration of Rights had followed, and in 1775 war had been seriously begun. In 1776 Washington took Boston; and the Declaration of Independence (4th July, 1776) proclaimed the birthday of the United States. Thirteen provinces joined in that solemn act.

In Europe a great enthusiasm followed the news; those liberty-loving sovereigns, Catherine II of Russia and Frederick the Great, welcomed this outburst, which, apart from the echoes aroused in philosophic hearts, was likely 'to cut the cock's-comb of England,' and, as was thought, to undo all she had built up with so much glory during the Seven Years' War. In France also a great enthusiasm arose, especially among the young nobles; it reached its height when the King received the American Franklin, the man of science and practical ideas, at Versailles in 1777. The Court was not anxious to commit itself to war: Louis XVI himself held back; for the ideas of the revolted provinces were not without much peril for him. Crowds of volunteers, however, rushed forward: Franklin was the welcome guest of society; the flame was kindled in every well-bred breast; it became the fashion to admire the Americans, and to help them in their struggle. The most distinguished among the volunteers was the young Marquis de la Fayette, who at the age of twenty equipped a frigate at his own cost and sailed with a band of noble and enthusiastic comrades for America, and so began his long and chequered career.

While France hesitated, North and George III, in spite of the resistance of Pitt and the Whigs, pushed on their endeavours to stamp down the insurrection, hoping to end the war before the French could interfere. But the mishap of Saratoga on the Hudson (17 Oct. 1777), at which place General Burgoyne was obliged to capitulate with six thousand men, changed the whole face of affairs. The Americans took the offensive with vigour and spirit, and early in 1778 signed a treaty of

alliance and commerce with France; then a great maritime struggle between France and England began.

Early in 1778 serious entanglements threatened the peace of Europe; and the naval struggle of England with France and America, had war broken out in Germany, might have taken a very different turn. On the death of Maximilian Joseph, Elector of Bavaria, in 1777, the Emperor Joseph II, the 'Don Quixote' of Frederick the Great, had invaded Bavaria, intending to rearrange his Austrian frontier, 'rounding-off' for himself a more comfortable western borderland in the Upper Danube valley. Hereon, Frederick, not in the least intending that the Austrian House should become any stronger, or that Bavaria should be "the Silesia of the South,' at once interfered. He posed himself, after the old ideas, as champion of the Princes of the Empire against the Emperor, as an Elector eager only to check the unfair aggrandisement of the House of Austria at the expense of the Electoral body.

Though Joseph II was keen for war, his mother Maria Theresa was as eager for peace: France, siding with her, became the chief means of a peaceful solution of the difficulty. She had in Vergennes, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a skilful and capable diplomatist, who by arranging the Peace of Teschen (13 May, 1778) saved Europe from a great war, and probably secured the independence of the United States: for European war would have relieved the strain on the English sea-power, leaving her free to deal as she would with the insurgent colonists.

The Peace of Teschen was followed by an alliance between France and Spain against England: and a serious naval war ensued.

In this five years' contest the French naval power showed a wonderful revival of vigour and ability: the first engagement that they fought, off Ushant, in July, 1778, when D'Orvilliers met Keppel, was long and stubbornly contested, and ended in a kind of drawn battle, which seemed to deny to England that sovereignty of the seas of which she was so proud.

'Seventeen years ago,' said the Earl of Chatham, and they were his dying words (7 April, 1778), 'this people was the terror of the world—'; his strength went from him before he could complete the sentence; the silence was all the more striking. Now the sea-fight off Ushant seemed to show that the Empire of England was being weighed in the balance, and her ruin imminent.

There were four chief scenes of this war: first, the Channel; then the Siege of Gibraltar, which was begun the next year, and lasted till the peace; thirdly, the shores of North America; and last, the West Indian Islands. England was also engaged in a life-and-death struggle in Hindostan: in this, however, the French played a secondary part, although they were ranged on the side of Hyder Ali and Tippoo.

In 1779 the French and Spanish fleets prepared not only to assault Gibraltar, but to make a great descent on the English coasts. In the former attempt they were foiled by the strength of the rock and the vigilant courage of General Elliot; in the latter, though their fleets rode the Channel as masters, they were defeated by the elements: fierce weather made the transport of troops across the Channel difficult; time was lost, the ships' crews became unhealthy, and D'Orvilliers' great expedition came to nothing. The English pride was now thoroughly aroused; a war-panic was followed by a vigorous effort to retrieve the disasters and disgraces of these years: for in the year 1778 the American Paul Jones had inflicted great damage on English commerce: and D'Estaing, one of the best French sailors, a man full of enthusiasm for the new Republic, had defeated Admiral Byron in the West Indies, after taking the Islands of S. Vincent and Grenada.

Now, however, the tide turned. Rodney in 1780 defeated the combined fleets of France and Spain, and relieved Gibraltar and Minorca, both hard-pressed with war and famine; then, sailing for the West Indies, he did much to redress the balance in favour of England. The English power had re-established itself firmly in the southern colonies of North America, and

repulsed with great loss D'Estaing's attack on Savannah in 1779. The Americans were much dispirited at their losses and reverses, and Washington and Congress appealed to France for help: La Fayette returned home to support their cry, and a brilliant expedition of seven ships, a large sum of money, and six thousand picked troops, under Count Rochambeau, sailed for America.

This moment saw a great uprising of the naval powers of Europe against the arrogant right of search long claimed and exercised by England. The pleadings of France were heard with ready ear by the sovereigns of Europe, especially by Catherine II of Russia. That great princess saw that she might claim the proud position of protector of the sea, and published a declaration which, though it stated only general principles, was aimed as directly against England as if George III had been named in it. Freedom of navigation was claimed: the flag should cover the merchandise; all neutral bottoms escorted by a ship of war should be free from search; a blockade to be respected must be real. The England of this day accepts these principles heartily: a century ago they seemed to be a direct attack on her authority on the high seas. The powers of Europe not actually at war with England all adopted the principles of 'the Armed Neutrality'; Russia and Prussia, Denmark and Sweden, the two Sicilies, and even Austria, united to enforce it. When Holland also joined the Neutrality, she was at once attacked, without due formalities, by England, and utterly defeated. France, who had been the motive power in it all, rejoiced; she hoped that she and Spain, making common cause with America, might succeed in destroying the English preponderance at sea. Although Holland was wellnigh ruined, the French fleets took the ascendancy wherever they met the English. De Grasse defeated Howe with great loss in the West Indies. The French ships sailed thence to Chesapeake Bay, to support Washington and Rochambeau in a great and well-planned effort to reduce Lord Cornwallis. De Grasse drove the English ships out of the bay, and carried Washing-

ton's troops over into the peninsula of York Town, leaving La Fayette with another army to hold Cornwallis in check. Then the combined forces, French and American, assaulted the English position at York Town, took the outer works, and compelled the army to capitulate (29 October, 1781). Six ships of war were taken, seven thousand men made prisoners: the struggle between England and her revolted colonies drew towards an end.

The news appalled all England; it was thought that she would never recover from the blow. Government announced that it had abandoned all thought of subduing the colonists: public feeling was deeply moved, London taking the lead in opposition and remonstrance. In the spring of 1782 Lord North resigned the seals, and the Rockingham Ministry, with Fox as Foreign Secretary, came into office. Things began to look less hopeless for England; good tidings from India cheered all men; Rodney's victory over De Grasse (12 April, 1782), off Saintes in the Antilles, seemed to promise the recovery of English power at sea. Now too the tide turned in Europe also. The French and Spaniards, after reducing Minorca, had pressed Gibraltar closely: all their efforts were shattered against that impregnable rock, defended by the iron resolution of General Elliot; and when the British fleet, taking advantage of rough weather, once more had revictualled the place, they abandoned the siege as hopeless. Gibraltar had occupied the main part of their strength: its resistance gave England time to recover herself, and enabled her to make an honourable peace. Late in 1782 the independence of the United States was acknowledged, and peace between England and her former colonies followed; the great influence of Franklin at Paris was exerted on behalf of peace. Austria and Prussia stepped forward as mediators: the French ministers were also inclined for peace. Necker had published his *compte rendu*, his attempt at a real statement of the financial position of the country in 1781, and as a consequence of this step had fallen from power. The Queen and Court had proved too strong for

him; it was thought that Necker aimed at becoming a Turgot; that he wished to abolish privilege; that he wished to reduce the French crown to the melancholy position of that of England, where Parliament had control of the finances, and kept the monarch within bounds. Louis XVI, weak as usual, could not stand against the clamour and pressure of the Court: he allowed Necker to resign (25 May, 1781): all France felt as if her only friend and helper had been swept away.

Marie Antoinette thereon became omnipotent over the poor King's mind with disastrous results. One weak and foolish minister succeeded another, with an unvarying increase of the country's debts. It was during their nominal management of affairs that the Peace of Versailles was signed (3 September, 1783) between France, England and Spain. England restored to Holland all her colonies except Negapatam; she gave Minorca and Florida to Spain; to France she ceded all that the Treaty of Utrecht had stipulated respecting Dunkirk. The Indian Empire of England remained untouched; her hold on Gibraltar was unshaken; and by a separate peace, signed the same day, she finally and solemnly recognised the independence of the United States.

The war, in the main glorious for France and for her ally across the Atlantic, added nothing to the stability of the monarchy; on the contrary, the heavy costs added terribly to the embarrassments of the state. The young nobles and soldiers, who returned with glory from America, brought back with them an enthusiasm for republican institutions and liberty. The army, that last resort and bulwark of despotic monarchy, was now filled with the new ideas, and could not be trusted when the crisis came.

Things went from bad to worse: Calonne's ministry was the degradation of France; it was the corrupt Court gaily dragging the monarchy and itself to ruin. Fresh debts, fresh anticipations of revenues, additional taxes, bursal edicts, seemed to restore plenty to the Court, which plunged ever deeper in reckless amusements, as if this hollow life would last for ever. Early

in his reign Louis XVI had given some hours every day to business of state; that was in his young willingness for good; now all was swallowed up by court life, hunting, dissipations. The Queen could bear no serious people; and the King gradually gave way to her humour, becoming as careless and useless as the rest. 'At Marly, amusements from dinner at one till one the next morning. At Versailles, three shows and two balls a week, two great suppers, Tuesdays and Thursdays, from time to time a run into Paris for the Opera. At Fontainebleau three plays a week, cards, suppers, and the rest. In winter the Queen gave a weekly masked ball, the preparation for which occupied all the intermediate time and what stood for the thoughts of the Court[1]': the dresses were so important. Every one played high: scandal raged, and did not fail to touch the highest and most frivolous of all. The startling incident of the Diamond Necklace threw all society into a ferment in 1785: that a Cardinal, a Prince of the Church, should have made the Queen so splendid a gift, costing over a million and a half of livres, was a delightful subject for the malicious tongues of France. Marie Antoinette, though not guilty herself, gave people many excuses for thinking her so: the literature of the day, low-toned and weak,—for all the great authors were dead,—made up for its feebleness by its vehemence of hatred and recklessness in accusation.

The Court despised the King, the 'locksmith,' who seemed actually to enjoy the masquerade of the mill and farm at the little Trianon. His habits were simple; if they would only give him his hunt he was satisfied with anything, and asked for nothing more; he forgot the troubles of his country, and wrote 'Nothing' in his diary, meaning 'no hunting,' on days in which the whole fortunes of his kingdom were at stake.

After three years of senseless expedients, Calonne at last told the King that things could go on no longer as they were. He seems to have believed that he could persuade the privileged classes to give way. At his suggestion Louis XVI called in

[1] Taine, Ancien Régime, i. p. 143.

1787 an Assembly of Notables, before whom the state of the finances was laid. Calonne proposed to them that they should face the great need by suppressing the corvées, by overthrowing the existing system of revenue-farming, by abolition of all privileged exemptions. In fact, after a lapse of thirteen years, the old plans of Turgot were once more urged on those very classes which had refused them before, and which since that time, thanks to Calonne himself, had been enjoying a very comfortable time at the cost of France. The Notables, who owed so much to Calonne, now treated him as a traitor[1]; they clamoured for his dismissal: even the Count of Artois[2] abandoned him. The unscrupulous minister fell, and was succeeded by the incompetent Cardinal Laurence de Brienne.

Then the Assembly of Notables accepted the proposed reforms. Now however the French people wanted far more than they would give, and we have the strange sight of the nobles offering definite and important reforms, while the Parliament of Paris stands forward as the champion of privilege, the steady opponent of reform, and is applauded to the echo by the people. In this feverish and unwonted state of the public mind, the idea of a convocation of the States-General somehow came into being[3]. It was accepted at once as the solution for the difficulties of the time, the one escape from ruin. Even the Parliament itself declared that the States-General alone could rightly vote taxes. The Court hereon declared war against the Parliament; and when the lawyers refused to register an edict ordering a tax, the registration was enforced: when they declared a forced registration to be invalid, they were exiled to Troyes. All the Courts and Parliaments of France now joined in calling for the States-General: the King reluctantly, and with reservations, promised that they should be convoked.

[1] See Mallet du Pan, Mémoires, i. p. 141.

[2] Charles Philippe, younger brother of Louis XVI, afterwards Charles X.

[3] 'A peine ce grand mot d'*Etats-Généraux*, murmuré tout bas pour la première fois dans l'Assemblée des Notables, fut-il solennellement prononcé dans une délibération du Parlement, qu'il retentit comme un coup de foudre dans la France entière.' Pontécoulant, Souvenirs Historiques, i. p. 89.

The few remaining pages of this volume are intended to trace the fall of the Monarchy, not the rise of the Revolution, closely though the two are connected: it will therefore be enough if we touch very slightly on those deeply interesting matters which heralded the great changes that were coming. The Monarchy, in fact, had become so weak as almost to be of no account in the struggle: even the personal character of the King is almost effaced by the influences around him; and as he drifts towards the great catastrophe before him, we seem to lose our earlier interest in him.

At first it seemed as if the movements of the time were resolving themselves into a complicated struggle between the Court and the privileged bodies. The Parliament and the noblesse joined in defending their privileges from the attacks of the Queen and the ministers; and the popular sympathy seemed to be on their side in the struggle. They called for the States-General, believing that two of the Estates at least would support them. On the other hand, the Court also, hoping to save the absolute power of the Monarchy, resisted the privileged classes, and appealed to the people for help: it proposed also to convoke the States-General, thinking that the popular elements in them would distinctly side with the crown against the aristocracy. It was a most perilous game: how would it turn out, if it appeared that the force of opinion among the people was in favour of dispensing with both privileged classes and a corrupt and burdensome monarchy? Early in his reign Louis XVI might have counted on great support from his people: the fifteen years that had passed had strengthened their hostility to all the existing governments: apart from other causes, the American war of independence had made the King's position untenable.

At the end of 1787 the King had recalled the Parliament to Paris: he took occasion, on their return, to give expression to his views and wishes. He told them that the States-General he had promised should be nothing but a larger royal council: that he reserved to himself the power of judging when they

should be convoked; that he would be 'sole arbiter of all their representations and griefs.' He ended by presenting to the Parliament for registration two edicts, framed, one might think, with the special intention of creating disturbance: for the one was an edict authorising the King to contract huge loans; the other restored to Protestants in France their civil rights. A violent debate ensued; and the King, before a vote was taken, rash where he should have been cautious and conciliatory, suddenly transformed the session into a 'lit de justice,' and ordered the Parliament to register the edicts without a vote.

This aroused a man, destined to make himself notorious in the coming time, Philip Duke of Orleans, who hated the Queen and sympathised with the popular movement. He protested against the whole proceeding, and led the Parliament in its resistance. He was banished to Villars-Cotterets.

The Parliament of Paris growing still more vehement, Louis XVI determined to take the reform of the nation into his own hands, and to crush all opposition by vigorous measures. Accordingly, in May 1788 he held a 'lit de justice' at Versailles, and declared his intentions: in his speech he showed that he had come back, though it was now too late, to the ideas which he had accepted from Turgot fourteen years before. The object which the King had in view was, however, very different. Then it had been a real desire for the people's happiness; now it was, chiefly if not solely, a wish to punish the stubbornness of the Parliament. Yet the proposed reforms read well. One King, one law, law-courts for lesser matters, Parliament for the larger matters of law, a Court of Archives to keep and register all laws, and States-General, whenever needed,—these names had a good sound. Louis XVI was prepared to grant as much constitutional life to France as England had been discontented with two centuries before. It was obvious that the King had no thought of relaxing the grasp of autocratic power: all resistance would be visited with his personal displeasure. The composition of the Courts he proposed to establish was to be left entirely to himself; the

convocation of the States-General should depend on his pleasure and convenience: nothing of real value was suggested as to taxation. Paris was not minded to sacrifice the Parliament, of which it was proud, for the chance of such reforms. And, moreover, public opinion had gone far beyond this point: already rhymes affixed to the public places had called for the King's deposition, and had expressed the popular hatred for the Queen[1]. The very form of the procedure was offensive; for a 'lit de justice' was well understood to mean 'the last act of the supreme authority;' and by announcing these reforms in this way, the crown gave expression to its sovereign power, and was certain to displease all save the courtiers at the foot of the throne.

To add to the discontent in Paris, the disastrous action of the 'Famine-ring' was once more felt: the edict which granted freedom to the grain-trade gave this terrible body a chance of operating; a bad season aggravated the evil, and, from one or other cause, great distress began in Paris; it was thought that sore famine impended. And now the different parties at Court concluded that the miserable First Minister, Brienne, had tried his hand long enough (25 August, 1788). 'Vaudreuil and the Polignacs persuaded the Count of Artois, and he persuaded the Queen: the dismissal of the Archbishop of Sens was achieved: the same persons secured the recall of M. Necker, as a last resource. The distress was now at its worst. There were but four hundred thousand livres in the royal treasure for all emergencies and needs; all other funds were exhausted: money could be got only at from

[1] At Versailles, Sept. 1787, these lines were pasted up:

'Louis XVI interdit, Antoinette au couvent,
D'Artois à Saint-Lazare, et Provence régent.'

May 1788, again at Versailles, in the very midst of the guards, this:

'Palais à louer,
Parlement à vendre,
Ministres à pendre,
Couronne à donner.'

And this at the very moment of the King's declaration of reforms. Mallet du Pan, Mémoires i. pp. 147, 149.

twenty to twenty-five per centum[1]:'—Necker was received with enthusiasm at Versailles: 'it was almost a burlesque, and gives us the thermometer of the distress. In a country of twenty-four million inhabitants it was necessary to appeal to a foreigner, a Protestant, a republican, dismissed seven years back, exiled last year, hated by the master, of principles and character diametrically opposed to those of the Court[2].' The delight of Paris and of society lasted but a short time: within a week of Necker's recall people, like unthinking children, were wondering that the finance of the country had not already come straight: the funds, which had sprung up in all the elasticity of vague hopes, now sank again in the sullenness of despair.

The foreign policy and interests of France were as powerless as the home-government. It was at this same moment that Holland, struggling in her old party-lines, between the burghers who leant on France and the popular party which clung to the House of Orange-Nassau and supported the Stattholderate, was reduced by Frederick the Great, who overthrew the French party, restored the Stattholder, and compelled Holland to depend on England not on France. In his dealings with Joseph II, Louis XVI was equally unsuccessful: everything foreboded trouble and an overthrow.

At last, things being desperate, the King consented to convoke the States-General for the 5th of May, 1789.

[1] Mallet du Pan, Mémoires, i. p. 153.
[2] Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FALL OF LOUIS XVI. A.D. 1789–1793.

WE draw towards the end. Steadily, for a century, the absolute Monarchy has been moving down towards the catastrophe which at last awaits it: a great king, a selfish and a bad one, and lastly, most fatal of all, a weak and amiable one, each in his turn performs his part in this slow overthrow of the edifice which France has spent her centuries and her life-blood to erect.

Louis XVI, kindly and willing as he was to help, was also impressed with a belief in the absolute authority of the crown: no real liberties could ever have sprung from him. It was with the utmost reluctance that he consented to the convocation of the States-General: and when he had taken that step, he had neither the intelligence, the vigour, nor the patriotism required to guide this new and tremendous engine of government, this new exponent of the ideas, the wants, the terrible discontents of the time. He regarded it chiefly, if not altogether, as a 'great financial expedient'; a machine by which to grapple with the hourly-growing deficit, with which to lighten the burden of the debt. That debt had passed two hundred and fifty millions of pounds sterling, at the value of the pound, as it then was[1]. The King seems to have believed that the States-General, without embarrassing the course of

[1] Arthur Young tells us that in 1791 the debt was '6,500,000,000 livres, or 284,375,000 pounds sterling.' Travels, i. p. 623 (ed. 1794).

things, would find some unknown remedy for this gigantic evil of debt. His whole conduct is that of an honest, stupid, incompetent gentleman.

How hard it was for him to go right! The Queen, who ought to have helped him, was his worst hindrance: the Court, on which he feebly leant, was split up into coteries rather than parties: there was no wisdom nor patriotism around him. The recall of Necker, too late, was not to his satisfaction. The noblesse, the old, the new by purchase, and the new by taking possession [1], were either absolutely opposed to all reform, or were among the most advanced of those who called for revolution: the philosophers, who had created the theoretic opinions on the subjects of the day, the young nobles, the young clergy, the littérateurs, were all eager for change: the burgher-world had lost much of its prosperity, thanks to the sense of uncertainty which reigned in these years; the manufactures had suffered greatly: their workmen were in rags and hungered [2]. Out of their ranks came forth many of those who were determined to push revolution to its extreme limits. The people were once more suffering from want, and this chiefly through the operation of the famine-pact; and 'the violent friends of the Commons (by which name men indicated the Tiers État) are not displeased at the high price of corn, which seconds their views greatly [3].'

Under these conditions came the elections to the States-General. It was so long since the last had met [4] that there was no little doubt and difficulty as to the right course to be followed: Englishmen who chanced to be in France were eagerly questioned; old documents were looked into; new questions arose, for which precedent provided no solution.

[1] It is strange to see how in France men have been, at different epochs, able to force their way without right into the ranks of the proud and privileged class. The same thing goes on at the present day in France, see Hamerton, Round my House, pp. 82 sqq.

[2] Arthur Young, Travels, i. pp. 608, 609 (ed. 1794).

[3] Ibid. i. p. 119.

[4] In 1614 at Paris, at the time of the declaration of the majority of Louis XIII. See vol. ii. p. 489.

How should the representatives be elected? When they came together, how should they sit? Should each Estate have a veto on the others? Should they sit together? Should the Third Estate, the 'Commons,' as the reformers eagerly called it, have a double vote? Should it sit in the same chamber with the others? The people, of course, claimed that their Estate should have a double vote, and that the voting should be by head, not by order: on the other hand, the nobles and clergy declared that the precedent of 1614 should be followed. The Parliament of Paris on being appealed to sided with the privileged orders:—how could any one have expected the lawyers to go against precedent?

Their declaration at once destroyed all their popularity. Up to that moment the people had regarded them as their leaders, and had sided with them against the Court; now they discerned that the Parliament was no reforming body, and would support established institutions against change. From this moment its influence and power come to an end. It was suppressed by the Constituent Assembly in 1790.

Though the Parliament went against the people, Necker was in favour of their claims, and Louis XVI conceded the great point of the double representation: he gave orders that there should be elected full as many to the Third Estate as to the two other Estates together. France, busied with these all-important elections, was in a very ominous and threatening state throughout the winter months of 1788, 1789. The weather was terribly severe, and famine raged in town and country: ghastly incidents occurred; men's minds were full of vague apprehensions; strange figures thronged the streets, people of a kind not often seen; the uneasiness was universal. Still, the elections passed off quietly and well; it was observed of the clergy[1] that while the prelates went with the noblesse, the curés inclined towards the Third Estate. On the 5th of May, 1789, they met at Versailles; there were two hundred and ninety-one

[1] A. Young testifies to the excellent moral state of the clergy at this time. Travels, i. p. 608.

Nobles; two hundred and seventy of the Clergy; and five hundred and seventy-eight of the Third Estate.

As we deal only with the fall of the Monarchy, we may be content here to sketch in merest outline the stormy history of the first meetings of this great Parliament of France. The Estates were summoned to sit at Versailles: and immediately on their arrival there the yet unsettled question as to the manner of their deliberations came to the front. The King had conceded to the Third Estate a representation just more than equal that of the other Estates combined: but what would be the value of that concession if the three chambers sate separately? The points connected with the verification of their powers, and (attached to it) the vital question of three chambers or one, then the subsequent and almost equally important question of vote by order or vote by head, demanded most careful handling. The King's government, instead, lingered over trivial questions of detail or ceremony, and lost hold of the initiative. The Estates seized the helm which had fallen from the feeble royal hands: and of the Estates the Third, now strongest in numbers, in hold on public esteem, and in knowledge of its own mind, very soon took the lead. It had with it a large portion of the clergy: as we should expect from the incidents of the American War, there were not a few of the noblesse who sympathised with it: even in the royal circle the Duke of Orleans was its friend. The Third Estate, supported by the general feeling of the country and by Paris, insisted that the three orders should sit and vote together, and vote by head and not by order: they saw that they would then have the command of the majority. A new element in the political life of the time sprang into active being: as before there had been swarms of pamphlets bought and read eagerly, so now followed the age of Clubs. The famous 'Club des Jacobins' began its existence at Versailles just before the meeting of the States-General; it was at first called the 'Club des Bretons,' being composed of deputies from Brittany: when, however, it was transferred to Paris with the Assembly, it found a final home in the street

of the Jacobins, and thence got the name, or nickname, by which it is known to history. The influence of the clubs on the movement of politics was exceedingly great: they formed the centres whence ideas, schemes, resolutions, revolutions, poured forth and shaped the course of affairs in the stormy years which we have reached.

From the beginning the royal government made incredible blunders in all things, and played ignorantly, yet persistently, into the hands of the Third Estate. As before, by weak attempts to comfort the people, the Court had succeeded in rousing its hostility[1], so now, by its vacillating attempts to retain the distinctions between the Estates, it brought on their union into one chamber, and the consequent downfall of the two privileged bodies. Necker had, strangely enough, provided no separate chamber for the Third Estate, so that it installed itself of necessity in the great Hall of the Estates, in which they, after ancient usage, would have met in case of common deliberation; once there, once in possession, the ground was theirs: and who can deny the great force of actual occupation in time of change, when the occupying power is also the most vigorous? Towards the great Hall a certain number of the noblesse, and the majority of the clergy, gravitated, and threw in their lot with the Third Estate, accepting and strengthening their position.

They proceeded at once to verify powers for all the orders. The noblesse did not appear in form; they were passed over: the clergy generally also refused to answer to their name; some curés, however, asked to submit their powers for verification; they were received with all honour, and precedence was given them over the members of the Third Estate. All, as yet, was moderate and calm.

The next step was equally important, though it may seem trifling. What should the new Assembly be called? Mirabeau claimed for them the title of 'Representatives of the People,' and in so doing he laid down, in truth, the principle which ruled

[1] 'Comment on *souleva* le peuple en voulant le *soulager*.' See De Tocqueville, Ancien Régime, iii. ch. v. (heading).

his conduct during the short and memorable fragment of his life. Representatives of the people, and the King with a veto, made, to his mind, the only true form of government for France in the future. The old aristocracy must go: a great plain of level institutions must spread from end to end of France, and over all should be a renewed monarchy, free from hindrances from the noblesse, relieved from its embarrassments of debt, delegating all active government to the people, yet posed magnificently above it. On this theory Mirabeau declared that without the royal veto he would 'rather live in Constantinople than in France.'

'Representatives of the People,' however good as a description, was not a satisfactory title for the body. In old times the phrase 'National Assembly' had often been used as equivalent to the States-General. It was now settled that this name should be adopted at once; and by a large majority the title was finally accepted. Thus the Third Estate, with some of the clergy among them, and a sprinkling of the nobles, seized the vacant command of the movement of the time. It was an usurpation, no doubt; yet an usurpation justified by the needs and will of the nation.

This new power, treated now with rash discourtesy by the foolish King, and finding the doors of the Hall of the States-General closed against it, adjourned to the neighbouring tennis-court, the 'Jeu de Paume,' where they took solemn oath never to separate till 'the constitution of the kingdom had been established and confirmed on solid foundations[1].' From that moment this newly-constructed body took to itself, with justice, the title of the 'Constituent Assembly,' because it was under oath to build up the constitution of the country. It was a declaration of war against the ancient absolute monarchy; the oath was taken by the whole Assembly, with but one exception.

The position of the Monarchy was grave and critical, though certainly not desperate. Face to face with this half-usurped authority of the people, with the National Assembly, and with

[1] Moniteur, June 21, 1789 (Reprint of 1840, i. pp. 89, 90).

Paris, Louis XVI needed firmness as well as honesty, good counsellors instead of the untimely suggestions of his traditional position or the unwise dignity and pride of his spouse. She showed indeed a dauntless front in the worst moments: this was, however, the very bearing which was fatal to her cause. The King's reign had been, as has been truly said, the most prosperous period of all the old régime: the Monarch himself the kindliest, the most honest-hearted of princes. Yet all turned to evil. The improved state of the nation only threw light on the terrible anomalies and injustice of society; the King's desire to better the condition of his subjects, 'all for the people, and nothing by them,' after the true principle of an eighteenth-century despot, was taken amiss, sometimes resented, sometimes regarded as a sign of fear and weakness. Louis XVI cherished also the ancient traditions of unlimited power, and was tempted to act in an arbitrary way; 'the smallest step in this direction taken by him seemed to France more hard to bear than all the despotism of Louis XIV [1].'

Mirabeau, 'the soul of the National Assembly [2],' by his aggressive and startling eloquence seemed to sway the course of affairs; on him the reconstruction of the King's position apparently depended. He had a real desire to reconcile the monarchy with the people. Whether the Court purchased him or not must remain an open question; it is certain that he received large sums [3]; though perhaps these were intended for his cause rather than for himself. Whether this remarkable man could have swayed and curbed the revolutionary spirit is uncertain: hot republicans, who hated him, loudly declared that 'had he lived, he would have destroyed the revolution [4]'; yet it is not at all clear that his power and popularity could have achieved the great feat of reconstituting society on new bases, and of building where he had been foremost to pull down.

[1] De Tocqueville, L'ancien Régime et la Révolution, p. 292.
[2] Schmidt, Tableau de la Révolution Française i. p. 3.
[3] Mallet du Pan, Mémoires, i. pp. 229, 230. Mallet of course takes the worst view of his acts.
[4] So Brissot declared; Mallet du Pan, Mémoires, i. p. 228.

And the Court seconded him very ill, and would have been of little service to him. For the Court was not loyal to the country, or to any one, in truth. Its hopes were fixed beyond the frontier; and it had no heart for any reconciliation with the Assembly or the people.

Meanwhile, to political excitement and change were added the special risks of famine. The state of Paris was a disgrace to the civilised world; a disgrace that a great capital should be given over to absolute want of bread, in time of peace: the influences of the famine-pact filled the imaginations of the citizens, who attributed all their sufferings to misconduct and mismanagement. The storm, day by day, lowered more and more threatfully.

On the 23rd of June, 1789, occurred the first collision between the Crown and the Assembly. On that day Louis XVI held a royal session. From the throne he made a long discourse, lamenting the conduct of the commons and making his formal declaration of concessions. These, large as they were, did not touch the true ground of the quarrel: as to that, he declared himself in favour of separate orders, and bade the Assembly meet next day each in its own chamber. When he withdrew, he was followed by most of the noblesse, all the bishops, many clergy. The remainder stayed, agitated deeply by the King's offers and claims. They were soon brought by Mirabeau to see that they must persevere if they would succeed: and when the master of the ceremonies came to request them to withdraw, he rose and replied for the whole Estate—'Go tell those who sent you, that we are here by the will of the people, and will retire only at the point of the bayonet.' The Court shrank from such bold action, and the Third Estate remained victoriously in possession of the ground.

This was open war, and plain defeat to the royal authority. Necker, convinced that he could do no more against the malign counsels which prevailed at Versailles, had tendered his resignation, and had withdrawn from the Palace amidst the plaudits of the people. On the following day the Duke of Orleans, with

forty-six of the noblesse, made their appearance in the common hall, and were received by the Assembly with most vivid enthusiasm.

The King's position grew hourly more critical: it was seen that if it came to actual fighting, the troops could not be relied on for his defence: he was obliged to yield. He ordered the remainder of the noblesse to join the Assembly, and they obeyed with ill-dissembled reluctance. The three orders were now (27 June, 1789) united: noblesse and clergy had accepted, willingly or not, the victory of the commons. In the King's Councils, at the last moment, the war-party, headed by the Count of Artois, and urged on by the noblesse and the bishops, now prevailed: they were soon to find that they leant on a reed when they thought that the army would fight for the old order of things. In a fortnight's time the insurrection broke out: Louis dismissed Necker, whose resignation he had not before accepted, and threw himself in with the war-party. The troops, quite ready to join the popular side, and dazzled by the Duke of Orleans, refused to put down the insurrection: the revolution went on with vigorous steps. The National Guard, the Municipality of Paris, the Tricolour, all sprang at once into being; Paris had achieved her victory, and the Monarchy was defeated, almost without the striking of a blow.

This defeat of the Monarchy was followed by vigorous measures: insurgent Paris seized the Hôtel des Invalides, the great arsenal, where the pensioners and gunners made no resistance. Twenty cannon, and a vast store of muskets and bayonets fell into the hands of the people: henceforth the Revolution was armed. Everywhere the regular army showed sympathy with the insurgents: it was determined at the Hôtel de Ville that the Bastille, that symbol of the ancient system, should be attacked at once.

Here again no vigorous resistance was made; thirty Swiss who were in the garrison alone fighting with vigour. Had the troops under Besenval in the Champ de Mars been trustworthy, they might have rescued the Bastille, while this handful of men

still defended it. The army, however, could not be trusted; and Besenval, instead of marching forwards, fell back to Sèvres, and thence to Versailles. De Lannoy, the aged commander of the Bastille, who had shown great energy and determination, was at last compelled to offer terms: the insurgents promised that he and his men should take no harm, and the wild crowd was admitted into the building. The promise of their chiefs was of no avail: hot with excitement and triumph, the mob insisted on blood: and the fall of the Bastille saw the beginning of those terrible massacres which stained the early years of the Revolution.

In the vaults of the building were found only seven prisoners, so completely had the milder rule of Louis XVI reversed the customs of former days; so entirely had the old abuse of 'lettres de cachet' disappeared: none of the seven prisoners were political offenders. The Bastille itself was levelled to the ground: and with its fall fell the old régime in France.

Once more Louis XVI decided on fresh concessions. He appeared in the Assembly, and announced his intention of removing his troops (they were well-known to be only half-hearted for him at best) from Paris and Versailles: he relied on the fidelity of the National Assembly. The effect of this statement was great: Paris was instantly calmed: Bailly was appointed mayor, La Fayette made commander of the civic forces. The King, hoping to strengthen the feeling in his favour, paid a visit to the capital. The keys of Paris were brought him at the gate by Bailly with the words, 'I offer to your Majesty the very keys which were presented to Henry IV. He entered Paris as its conqueror: now the people have conquered their sovereign.' Louis appeared at the window of the Hôtel de Ville with the tricolour cockade on his breast; and Paris, amidst universal plaudits and enthusiasm, acclaimed him as the new-found Sovereign of the people. This visit thwarted all the plans of the Duke of Orleans, and the party which went with him: they had meant to raise that abandoned creature to the dignity of Lieutenant-General of the realm. His vacillation and

cowardice had been clearly proved: Mirabeau henceforth shook himself free from him, discerning that it was not with such an instrument that the Monarchy could be saved.

Thus the 'day of the 14th of July' seemed likely to bring about a happy reconciliation between King and people, and might have done so but for the wrongheadedness of the Queen and her party. The King's mild and beneficent character, had he been duly supported by vigorous and sensible friends and ministers, might possibly have become the basis for a new monarchy.

Unfortunately the Queen's party, and the party of the Duke of Orleans, at every step neutralised the good intentions of the ill-fated King, instead of supplementing by devoted friends and followers his want of vigour and earnestness. The King's visit to Paris was regarded by the Queen's friends as a fatal blunder: on that very day they abandoned the royal cause, and set the example of that great emigration, which in its ultimate effects totally changed the character of the Revolution. The Count of Artois went, taking with him the Princes of Condé, Conti, and Broglie, Breteuil also and the Polignacs. The Queen was left almost alone. She would neither accompany the King into Paris; her pride forbade that: nor would she fly with the nobles; her courage and obstinacy would not allow that. So she remained, a centre of misfortune for Louis XVI.

The taking of the Bastille had aroused all France: national guards were organised in every town; the Parisian ferment and excitement spread far and wide. In country places the peasants attacked their noble lords; it was a new Jacquerie: the noblesse had no strength to resist, and fled in crowds over the border. The remainder, too late, laid down their ancient feudal rights and powers. The flight of some, the surrender of others, soon left all power in the hands of the Assembly and Paris.

The Assembly, with great speed, framed its new constitution: it decreed that there should be a single Chamber: it refused

to allow the King an absolute veto on its decrees. In the Assembly itself two main parties, the Right and the Left, were formed at once. Of these, the former, with Mirabeau, hoped to retain a modified monarchy: the latter, under inspiration of the clubs, was the party of more vigorous action.

It is said that the troubles which surged up again in Paris were fomented by the Orleanist faction: be this as it may, the city daily grew more excited; the want and misery was excessive; all kinds of rumours fed the irritated crowd with suspicion and alarm. Though Necker had been recalled by the King, after the 14th of July, and had been welcomed with warm hopes by the people, it soon became clear that his influence was gone, and that neither Louis nor he could command the storm.

At this moment came that unlucky banquet to the Swiss guards at Versailles, with the anti-republican sentiments and music, the white cockades, the loyal enthusiasm of the few. That they should feast while the capital starved seemed a thing not to be borne: the surging populace, excited by women crying 'Bread! Bread!' set out in a tumultuous mass for Versailles. They first insulted the Assembly, which was sitting, and then turned towards the Palace. When they came there, the King was out hunting; that was his one passion and pleasure in these dark days, the one solace of his feeble mind. There he was happy; he liked that far better than grappling with his unruly subjects, or leading them in their aspirations for liberty and a new order of things. So now, he was at the chase when the Paris mob besieged his palace gates. On his return he was a prey to sore incertitude: upright and humane, he refused to fire on a crowd of women, and no resistance was made. The citizens at last took him captive, and insisted that he should go to Paris. The Queen, brave and heroic, but alas! unwise even now, refused to be separated from him. With her and his young son, the hapless King made a gloomy march from Versailles to Paris on this 6th of August 1789; the people,

as they went, insulted 'the baker, his wife, and the little apprentice[1].'

Thus Paris at one blow conquered both King and Assembly; that body, intimidated and with uncertain steps, followed the fallen monarch to the capital. There both were under the direct and jealous supervision of the populace, which henceforth became, to a new and alarming extent, the arbiter of the fortunes of France. The royal family at the Tuileries was soon taught that it was in virtual imprisonment. The constitutional section of the Assembly strongly urged the Queen, whose character and resolute aims were equally hateful to the Parisians, to withdraw quietly from France, and to sever her unpopularity for the time from the royal cause. She, with heroic and foolish obstinacy, refused to separate her fortunes from the King's, glad to die rather than yield an inch to those she hated and despised; probably, also, she was not without a belief that her helpless position at the Tuileries would bring her German kinsfolk the quicker to the rescue.

Therefore the royal party remained united in their palace-prison, subjected to insult from the populace and to supervision from the national guards who secured them. During this period, lasting for a year and a half, the King received frequent expressions of the affection and unalterable respect of the people; they styled him the 'best of princes,' 'the friend of law, the restorer of liberty, the parent of the poor[2].' Nor were these mere phrases: there was a real feeling in favour of Louis XVI; his kindliness and humanity, his willingness to yield, his personal virtues, all made men eager to tempt him to accept a new and splendid position as 'King of the French' instead of 'King of France.' Meanwhile, the Assembly, continuing its course, swept away the powers of the noblesse and the clergy, took from the King his right to make peace or war, against Mirabeau's advice; and, finding

[1] Alluding to the farm and mill at the Petit Trianon.
[2] Schmidt, Tableaux de la Révolution Française, i. p. 4.

that Louis accepted this change without resistance, they ended by voting him a liberal civil list.

The confinement to the Tuileries grew daily more irksome to the King, whose one solace was the chase; he complained bitterly of it, and his health began to suffer from his sedentary life. His anxiety to get out into the open country led the Parisians to suspect him of wishing to escape to the frontier: the continued emigration of the noblesse, the departure of the King's aunts for Rome, who were credited by some with carrying off with them the young Dauphin, and leaving a page to personate him at the Tuileries, all added force to the growing suspicion. The King was more sedulously watched; and when in April 1791 he attempted to drive out to S. Cloud, ostensibly at least for a day's hunting, the Parisians surrounded his carriage, cut the traces, and, without any actual violence, compelled him to turn back. He then knew that he was indeed a prisoner.

It was not long before this time that Mirabeau had connected himself closely with the King; he had had an interview with Marie Antoinette, in which the feelings of the great nobleman seemed completely to have overwhelmed those of the advanced politician: as he kissed the hand graciously outstretched to him, he exclaimed with deep emotion 'Madame, the monarchy is saved.' He eagerly embarked in a scheme for a constitutional monarchy, on the English plan; he wished the King to escape to Compiègne or Fontainebleau, where, under the loyal protection of an army, commanded by De Bouillé, commander of Metz, who was known to be a moderate royalist and a determined officer, he would be safe from any sudden attack, and free from the immediate coercion of the Parisian populace. Mirabeau believed that he could be the moderator between the royal and the popular ideas; that his plan would successfully unite both in one; that he could save the Monarchy and be its first constitutional minister. At this very moment the hand of death was upon him: the excitements and efforts of the two years, and now

the fresh emotions of his great attempt to save the King, added to the effects of a disordered life, were too much for his strength; and he died, just as he hoped to find a solution for the disorders and evils of his country.

The plans for the escape of the royal family were not therefore broken off; the arrangements, under De Bouillé's command, were carefully drawn out; and, after long hesitation, the attempt was made in the night of the 20th of June, 1791. The royal party succeeded in getting out of Paris: the first stages of this eventful journey were safely accomplished, and they had reached Varennes, a little town between Châlons and Verdun, before they were recognised and stopped. They were then within eight leagues of Stenay, where De Bouillé was awaiting them: could they but have passed one more stage, they had been safe. As it was, the feeling was universal against them at Varennes: they were at once sent back to Paris. De Bouillé with his German troops appeared at Varennes an hour after the royal party had started on its return.

As they sadly traversed the long distance, reproaches, execrations, insults were heaped on them at every wayside village, shewing how completely the French people were alienated from their Sovereign: not a voice was raised in the King's favour. Paris was roused to the highest excitement by the news of the flight, the nearness of escape, the dramatic incidents of the capture, the King's return. Distinctly republican principles were now loudly avowed: parties were clearly marked off as monarchical and anti-monarchical.

The King was at once suspended from his functions; and a strict guard placed over him, the Queen and the Dauphin. An outburst of the republicans in the Champ de Mars was vigorously put down by La Fayette, who for the moment seemed to hold the keys of the situation. His monarchical leanings and the dejection of the republicans led to a belief that he might yet be able to combine royalty with the constitution, and to take the place rendered vacant by Mirabeau's death.

The Assembly was for the time supported by loyal addresses from all parts of France: cities and provinces alike congratulated it on La Fayette's victory over the insurgent Parisians: it looked as if the capital stood alone face to face with the public opinion of the country. The Jacobins drew back and stood for a while on the defensive. The labours of the Assembly were drawing to an end; and they closed them by revising the Constitution. They restored to the King the power of appointing his guard, and gave him freedom; an amnesty for all concerned in the flight to Varennes followed. Louis appeared in Assembly and solemnly declared his acceptance of the Constitution. He afterwards (29 September 1791) attended the closing of the Constituent Assembly, and delivered a warm and generous speech. The Assembly then dispersed, after declaring that the Revolution was over, and that it had laid the solid foundations of a stable and constitutional government in France.

Unfortunately for its hopes two forces were yet unquelled: the Queen's party at the Court, and Paris. Before separating, the Assembly had virtuously passed a 'self-denying ordinance,' which rendered its members all incapable of re-election. The royalists were convinced by the incidents of the last few weeks that the country was still favourable to their party; they hoped for a conservative Assembly. Each party expected a change in its own favour: the change, as it came, was altogether fatal to the royal authority.

The elections to the new Parliament of France took place at a moment of great agitation, in which the not ill-founded dread of foreign invasion by the Queen's friends, and the flight to Varennes, had much affected the minds of men. The Legislative Assembly, which met on the 1st of October, 1791, was full of young men, the fearless representatives of the more advanced clubs. Yet Louis XVI was well received when he came in state to the Assembly; the majority were certainly favourable to the maintenance of the new constitution and the modified monarchy. The forms, however, with which the repre-

sentatives received him showed him plainly that he was no longer the representative of the old absolute monarchy. He returned home in dejection, and gave himself up for lost.

Yet, had he been wiser, he might have seen that the new Assembly was far from hostile to him. Here, as so often before, the Court was its own worst enemy. It allowed the Assembly to break up into parties: the Feuillants (from the club of that name), were the Right, the supporters of the monarchical constitution; the Girondists (from the Gironde, the district near Bordeaux) were the admirers of classic republicanism, the genuine, if rather pedantic, supporters of liberty and equality; and thirdly, the Jacobins were the terrible and powerful party of revolution; strong, fearless, and popular, they attracted to themselves all that was discontented, all that was extreme, and were clearly destined to win.

The King, so far as he could, was willing to stand loyally by the Constitution: unfortunately, other and sinister influences were behind him. Could the Court have rested honestly on the support of the Feuillants and the Girondists, the history of the revolution would have taken another and a brighter tone. But behind the King, were the Queen's party, the emigrants, the foreign Sovereigns. Their action naturally alarmed the Assembly and the nation, and threw the reins of power into the hands of the Jacobin party. When the Assembly laid before the King its decrees against the emigrant nobles and the clergy, he refused to sanction them: the act was received with undisguised satisfaction by the Jacobins. The election of a mayor of Paris in the place of Bailly next followed: again the Queen's party blundered; for rather than see La Fayette occupy that post, they threw their whole weight in with the extremer party: Pétion, candidate of the Girondists and Jacobins, was triumphantly elected.

Soon after this the King's ministers, daily more unpopular, both for the evil they had caused, and for that which they had not caused, were forced to resign office: a Girondist ministry succeeded. The misery at home was terrible: a foreign war

proclaimed against Austria (20 April 1792) was disastrous; and, in spite of La Fayette's success at Mauberge, the armies of France were defeated on every side. The terrible cry of 'Treason' soon sprang up: the failures were attributed to the Royalists; the Assembly declared itself permanent, dismissed the King's guard, and formed a camp of twenty thousand men near Paris. The Girondists fell, and a new ministry was formed from the Feuillants: that, however, could not possibly stand. The King, once more a prisoner, continued his correspondence with the allies, sending Mallet du Pan on a secret mission to Vienna, and beseeching the Germans to march into France. He sent with him a remarkable state-paper, recommending to the Emperor and the King of Prussia a course of moderation, and sketching the terms on which they should proclaim their mission as liberators of the King and nation from the tyranny of 'those who now ruled with a rod of iron all who sought to establish freedom.' He also prayed the emigrants to take no part in the invasion, lest they should give it the appearance of civil war [1].

The Girondists, now out of power, leant towards the stronger republicans, and coalesced with the Jacobins against the Crown. Tumults in Paris followed: the agitation, the fear of treachery, the bad and threatening news from every side, caused matters to take a very serious turn. The Paris multitude, in fierce insurrection, overawed the Assembly, and forced their way into the palace. The conduct of the royal family was dignified, even heroic, in the face of fearful dangers and horrid scenes. The King, the Queen, the Princess Elizabeth, the Princess Royal and the little Dauphin were entirely in the hands of the mob. Their dignity and noble bearing in adversity probably saved them from the worst calamities and outrages (20 June, 1792). The King appeared at the window, wearing the red cap, and the tumult gradually died down. The Girondists, who had arranged it, lost ground when it was seen that no

[1] Mallet Du Pan, Mémoires, i. pp. 284, sqq.

result followed the insurrection: a considerable feeling sprang up in the country in favour of the King; his friends urged him to escape; La Fayette, in spite of the Queen's dislike for him, besought him to proceed to Compiègne and appear in the midst of the constitutional troops. The King, believing that the allies would soon be in Paris to rescue him, refused all offers of help, and stood his ground. La Fayette even came up to Paris to demand the punishment of the chiefs of the insurrection: he failed completely, and returned to the army.

On the whole the republican party gained from these incidents: men now coupled the King's name with those of all who were most opposed to the revolution, with the allied Germans, the nobles, the clergy. At the end of July, the Duke of Brunswick, starting from Coblenz, invaded eastern France, declaring war on the new order of things, and proclaiming his intention of rescuing the King. The effervescence in Paris was intense; on the 10th of August came the great insurrection, which put an end to the ancient Monarchy of France.

The insurrection was resistless: the Queen would have fought, and even handed a pistol to the King; but he was irresolute and feeble, and could decide on nothing. At last he was persuaded, with all the royal family, to take refuge in the arms of the Assembly. With extreme difficulty a way was made for them from the Tuileries to the Hall of the Assembly in the next street.

Fierce fighting at once broke out: the insurgents, guided by Robespierre and Danton, soon carried all before them. The King's Swiss guard was overpowered; the Tuileries forced and sacked. A deputation from the victorious party, the new municipality of Paris, appeared at the bar of the Assembly, demanding, with the air of conquerors, the confirmation of their powers, the dethronement of the King, the immediate summoning of a National Convention. The Assembly, half cowed, half approving, did as it was bidden: the municipality of Paris had overthrown the Monarchy. Thus, without glory,

the long-tottering institution, which had held France in its hands for centuries, at last gave way and fell under blows which it had no longer any strength to bear.

The royal family were arrested and carried first to the Feuillant's club-house, and thence on the third day to the Temple: the doors closed on these sad victims of an ancient and worn-out monarchy; their dignified and noble bearing in the worst adversity showed them in a far better light than was ever cast on them by all the splendour of their earlier days: 'nothing in life became them like the leaving of it.'

Outside, the Reign of Terror soon began, with which happily our business does not lie. The Assembly was crushed and impotent; the dominant party wreaked its vengeance on its adversaries in Paris and in many provincial towns. The Legislative Assembly at last closed its ignoble life: the National Convention stepped into its place. The most prominent of the Jacobins were the first members elected by Paris. The Girondists, who sat on the right, were in a majority, the country districts returning them in large numbers: the Jacobins took the uppermost seats on the left, and obtained the sobriquet of the Mountain. Numerically in a minority, they had at their back the whole force of the Parisian revolution, and the sympathy of many towns: the most vigorous leaders in the insurrection of the 10th of August were there.

The National Convention at once decreed (on the 21st of September) that Royalty was abolished[1]. It also proclaimed the Republic, and swept away the Gregorian calendar. The 22nd of September 1792, was the first day of the First Year of the Republic.

These declarations, made on the motion of the Abbé Grégoire, form the point at which our subject ends. Stage by stage the Monarchy has been brought down: we have sketched its defeat, the deposition of the sovereign, his imprisonment, and lastly this abolition of all the ancient

[1] La Convention nationale décrète que la royaute est abolie en France.' Moniteur, 21 Sept. 1792 (Reprint of 1840, xiv. p. 8).

institutions. Paris had steadily advanced, and at each step the position of Louis XVI had become more precarious: at last the complete triumph of the Left overthrew the King. Why should we trace any farther the sad personal history of this amiable and incapable Prince?

Napoleon Buonaparte, then a young officer of engineers, and an ardent member of the Jacobin Club, was a witness of the attack made by the Girondists and the Paris mob on the Tuileries in June: the sight of the rabble before the palace filled him with anger and contempt, and, as he long afterwards told Bourrienne, he would gladly have seen them swept with grapeshot from the streets: he looked thoughtfully out on the tumult, and learnt from it much that helped him in his life: he discerned the floating weakness of the terrible mob; he saw the strength of the principles and motives which urged it on, and the want of power and direction in their result. His it would be, a very few years later, to seize on the enthusiasms and ideas of his age, to use the swiftly-moving currents of opinion, and by the force of an iron will and a pitilessly contemptuous nature, to command the enthusiasm and check the lawless ebullitions of his countrymen. The strength of the Republic lay in Paris: his strength would lie in the army; he would appeal to his country's patriotism and love of war: over the wearied parties of the past, the ardent emotions of the present, he saw how he might build up in the future the colossal fabric of his Imperial fortunes.

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